

6 APRIL 1981 AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION Rs 1

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ACCIDENT

Atomic Energy Department
in the doldrums

AT TARAPUR

The irresistible Binny look

Step out in style!
Watch the heads turn! You'll be
the focus of attention.

Binny offers you an ever-growing
range of versatile, durable fabrics
that keep you in pace
with fashion... Backed by
over a century of fabric expertise.



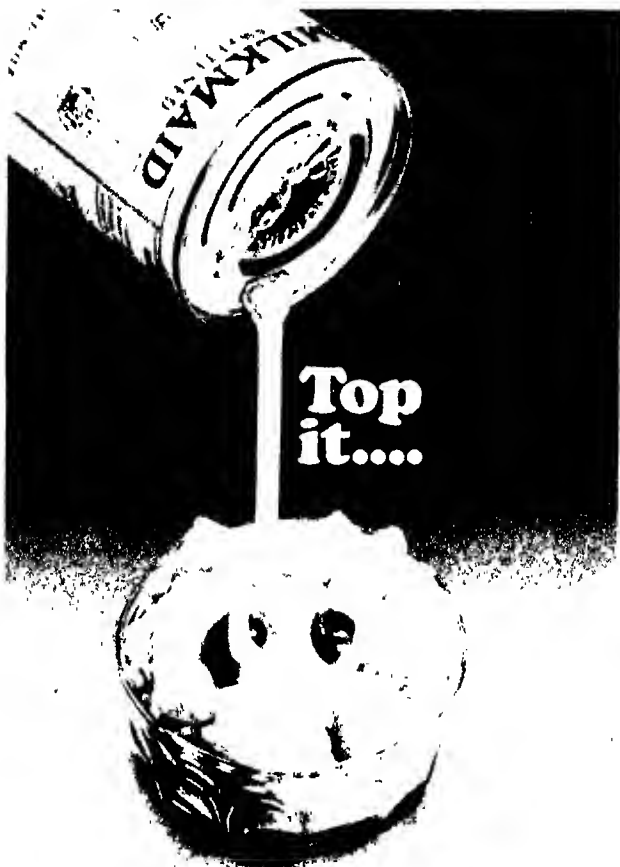
BINNY
blends, for every occasion



**Pour
it....**



**Spread
it....**



**Top
it....**

**Open a tin
Pour out
a world of
taste**

*Rich &
Creamy*

**makes the tasty
difference**

MM/CAS-11/80

**The fun
never fades
with**



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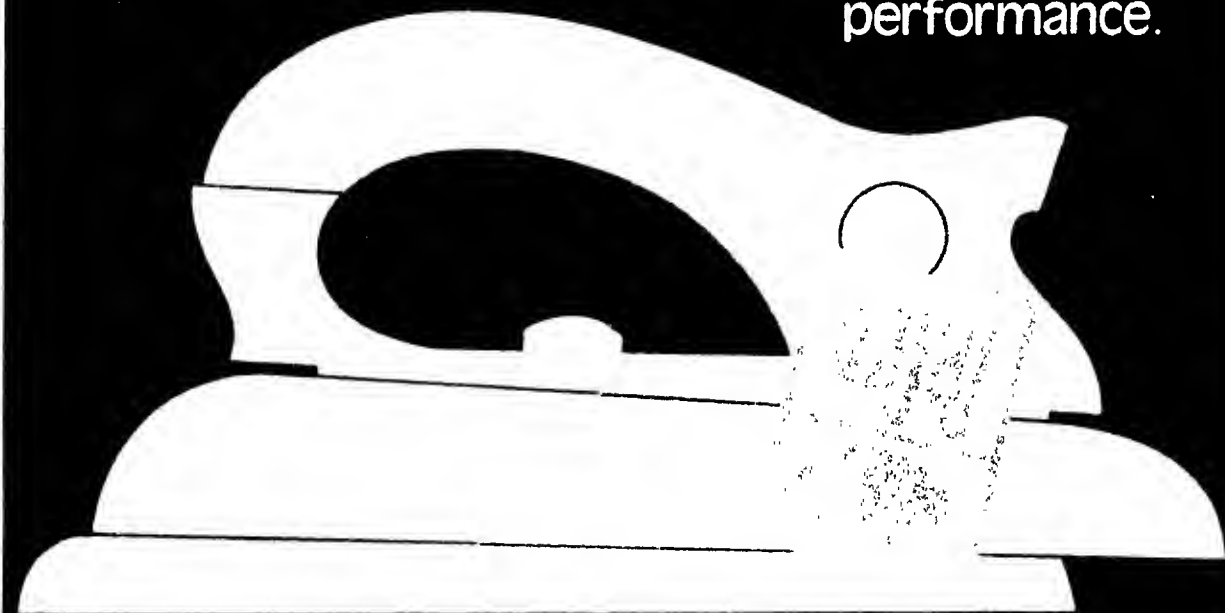
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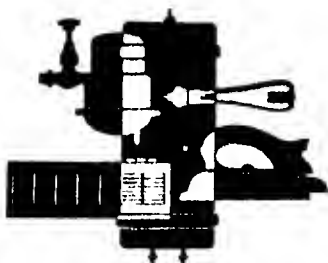
All you
need to know
about an iron
is its brand !

Every
Bajaj product
is backed by
constant
research
that guarantees
first-rate
performance.



Consider Bajaj Irons, for instance. Our continuous research has resulted in the development of the widest range of irons, sturdily built with a 10 micron chromium plating - an element made of mica and resistance wire. All exclusively designed to iron out every pressing problem.

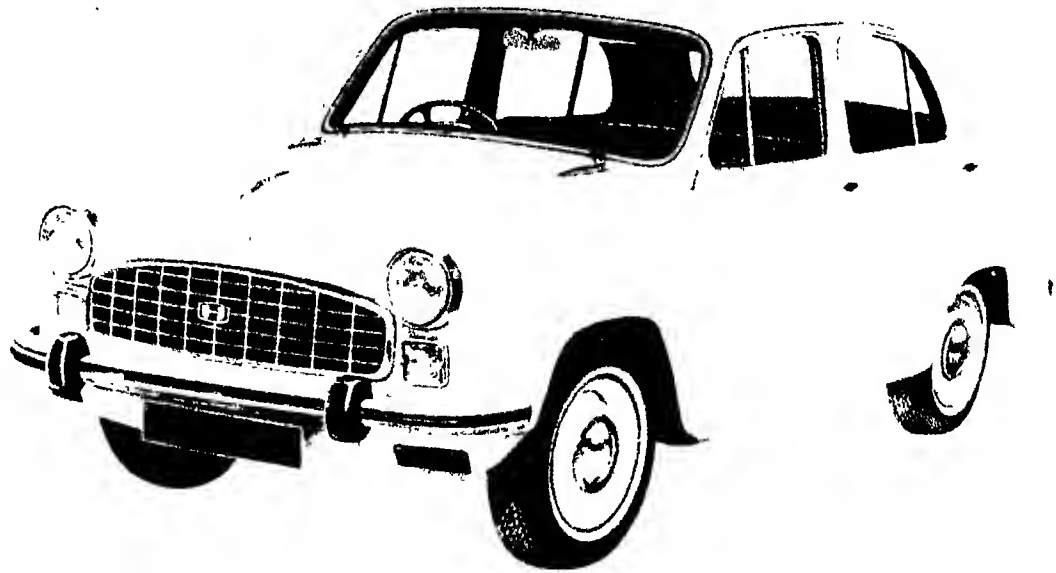
Pioneers of household appliances in India, Bajaj offer the most impressive array of these gadgets - backed by the largest network of sales and service centres in the country.



heros BE-471



BUY BEST... BUY bajaj



The car to take you places.



Ambassador
Mark 4.
The car to keep
you on the go.
Spacious and
comfortable. Reliable
and economical.

Styled to
match your
changing lifestyle.

Ambassador
Mark 4.

The good car,
for those who've
made it good.



Ambassador
Mark 4

Good show. Good going.

CC/HM-1/80

HINDUSTAN MOTORS LIMITED
CALCUTTA

**Light up your
life-style...**



**The New
star
GAS LIGHTER**

EASILY
REFILLABLE

**Carry convenience and
pride in your pocket.**

At one time or the other, you would have thought of owning a good-quality lighter which is economical. A lighter which serves you well, whenever you need light.

**It's here! The lighter you've
been looking for:**

- *Functional in all weathers
- *Leak-proof, gives thousands of lights
- *Operates smoothly with the flick of the thumb
- *Adjustable flame, easy filling and flint replacement
- *Economical to use
- *Light weight yet sturdy, with slim grip
- *Elegant, compact and durable
- *Choice of many colours
- *Guaranteed against manufacturing defects



An all purpose lighter
An all occasion gift

**star
GAS LIGHTER**

Your Convenient
Companion



GENERAL EQUIPMENT MERCHANTS LIMITED

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Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bhopal, Ahmedabad,
Bangalore, Chandigarh, Cuttack, Dhanbad, Cochin, Jaipur,
Lucknow, and Bokaro Steel City

Star-2128A

Eveready Safety.

Because tonight you may need
a torch to light a candle



EVEREADY
Like an extra pair of eyes in the dark



April 6, 1980



India's first major nuclear accident took place on March 14. A crack in the primary coolant tube of the Tarapur reactor eventually led to radio-active water flooding the hall floor. The Government sought to underplay the accident. Why did it happen? Are our nuclear reactors efficiently managed? What are the lessons to learn?



The single greatest reality of our time is loneliness. It spares no one. The rich, the poor, the intellectual as well as the unlettered. We can only come to terms with it and make it into a muse to help us create something.

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Editor M J Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra
David M Mahon Saumitra Banerjee Tirthankar Ghosh S. N. M. Akbar
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Ananya Bhattacharya

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Thirsti times Limcatimes



Discotimes Limcatimes
(Or the perk-you-up-for-the-hustle drink)



TVtimes Limcatimes
(Or the help-you-to-enjoy-the-Doordarshan drink)



Fashiontimes Limcatimes
(Or the make-you-look-more-confident drink)

Limca. A zingy, tangy mixture of Jamaican lime and Sicilian lemon flavours. A zero-bacteria drink. Isotonic salts to quench your thirst. Vitamin C too. Calorie-watchers prefer Limca to stiff drinks.

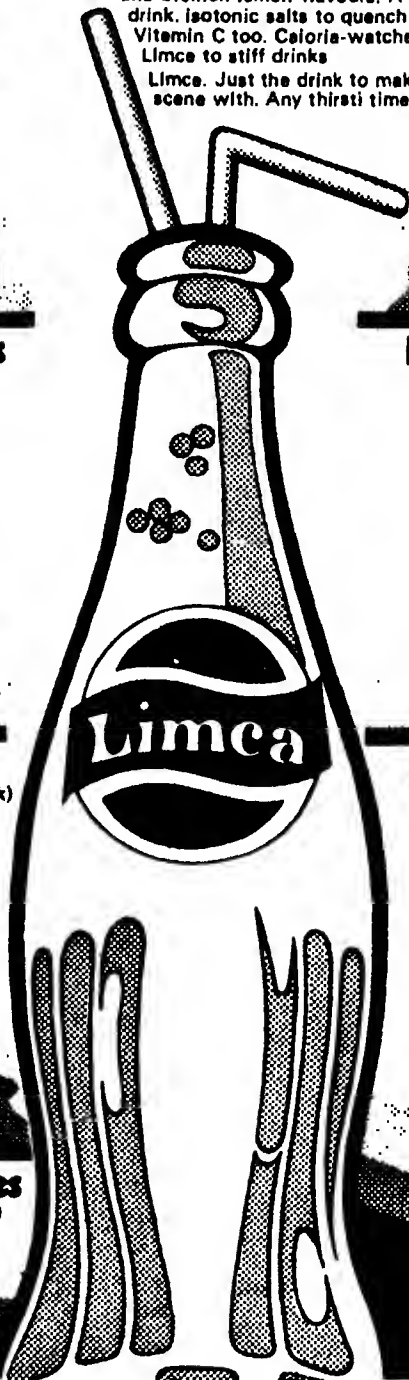
Limca. Just the drink to make the scene with. Any thirsti time.



Hikingtimes Limcatimes
(Or the climb-your-way-to-the-top drink)



Slimcatimes Limcatimes
(Or the help-you-keep-the-calories-down drink)



is veri veri lime'n'lemoni

RADEUS/PE/L-1A/80



Sell like hell

"DO our ads tell lies?" and "Sex and Indian advertising" (March 9) by Ashish Rajadhyaksha were superb. In a crowded world where there is stiff competition for sales, advertising becomes a purely industrial technique. Those who advertise the best sell the best. Even in everyday life, the one who can impress the most with his looks and words achieves success. Needless to say, all that glitters is not gold. One is reminded of an old joke that goes thus: Once a man died, and was sent to heaven as a reward for his noble deeds. In heaven he found himself in calm, serene and wonderfully fragrant surroundings. After some time he noticed a wall which had a small window. Looking through it he saw a well-illuminated hall where a breathtaking cabaret was in progress. Enchanted, he pleaded with his attendant to guide him in. The man was warned, and told it was no place for him to go to. But he insisted, and was finally led into a seething inferno with pools of blood all around where people were being brutally tortured. Shouting in disgust, the man again asked to be taken to the hall. The attendant replied that the hall was merely the 'publicity department' of hell, meant to lure innocent people from heaven. Advertisements—whether they show girls, filmstars, or sportsmen—are similarly deceptive.

Chandra Shekhar Dubey, Bhaagalpur

ALMOST everyday there is one advertisement or the other announcing a price-reduction on some product in the papers. However, few advertisements are as smart and stylish as the Regent King cigarette advertisement, showing a girl's rear zip coming down.

Rajib Ranjan Sen, New Delhi

MR RAJADHYAKSHA In his article refers to the Britannia advertisement for "Delite", its new biscuit brand. It is true that many had noticed the word "unpeel" on the pack, and, in fact, when a friend had drawn my attention to it I failed to come up with an immediate explanation. However, after some thought I arrived at a theory: If one wants to eat an orange, one has to "unpeel" it. Here the same word is used to suggest that no peeling is required. This is meant to imply that the biscuit has an orange flavour. "Unpeel" seems to stand for "without peeling". That is the farthest I could go! N. Anand, Coimbatore

KINDLY do me the favour of reading carefully, if, as seems likely, you have not done so till now, the article on advertising, "Do our ads tell lies?" offered still-born on the pages of SUNDAY, March 9, 1980. I had spent two hours with the writer of the article, attempting to explain (carefully, accurately, for the better part avoiding words of more than two syllables) the dynamics of a society uncertain about itself (there are many such in the Third World), and the expression of this uncertainty in apparent symptoms, of which advertising is merely one.

To be misquoted is one of the occupational hazards faced by an interviewee; to be quoted out of context is par for the course; however, to have attributed to one such sentences as, "if I keep drumming into your head that if you use Raymond's Suits you will be more successful with girls, what is wrong with that?" is more than an insult to the language. It is blatant, outright fabrication, the very stuff of libel actions.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha soils the pages of a periodical which has given us, among other splendid things, such exquisite insights into the human condition as the comic strip, "Peanuts". Certain therapeutic responses come instantly to mind. Sympathy and concern? Without question. The gift of an English primer

of "the cat sat on the mat" variety? It may well prolong the agony. Perhaps, all things considered, a swift and merciful frontal lobotomy. It could do nothing but good. Frank Simoes, Frank Simoes Advertising Pvt Ltd., Bombay

Ashish Rajadhyaksha replies: Mr Simoes appears to do himself an injustice; he is an extremely articulate person and our talk certainly did not flounder around two-syllable words. He offered me his views on advertising, which I accepted but did not agree with personally, as I surely have a right not to. Unfortunately, despite his seeming broadmindedness on misquoting as an 'occupational hazard' Mr Simoes still does not seem to understand the exigencies of journalism. A quote is always coloured by the comment on it, the light in which it is stated. If I had heartily agreed with him and said so just after the quote, I am positive he would not have accused me of misquoting. Secondly, the particular point he made that has been quoted, was made by him in an elaborate and circuitous manner, with examples (he would recall talking of my lilac shirt, which I had worn despite its not being advertised, to make a particular point). I had to condense it to one sentence. If he doesn't use phrases like 'drumming into your head' I can only apologise for a wrong choice of phrase.

WHAT is wrong in a firm trying to boost sales by advertising? It is an entirely legitimate practice with nothing unethical about it. Mind you, no sane person buys something because a pretty girl in an advertisement tells him to do so. Also, have you ever wondered how colourless and drab most of our magazines would look if it were not for these "lies"?

K. R. Avadhanulu, Sambalpur

Which doctor?

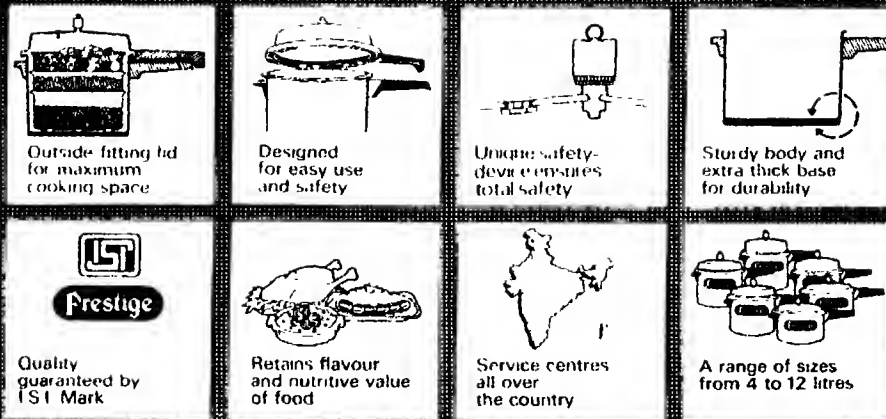
C. Y. GOPINATH's report "Driving out devils" (March 9) was interesting. I know of a similar experience. My elder sister was once suffering from malaria, and being treated by a doctor. While she was ill, a paramedical worker visited our house and gave some pills that he said would cure my sister. To our surprise, some hours after swallowing a few of them, my sister developed strange habits: she began throwing out her tongue like a lizard, making to catch a prey. In the meantime, my mother and grandmother, thinking she was under the influence of devils, began exorcising her by beating her. When my elder brother and I noticed the

inhuman treatment she was receiving, we stopped it. We consulted the doctor, and found that the unusual behaviour was actually due to chemical reactions produced in the body by the tablets swallowed. One should be careful to consider such anomalies scientifically.

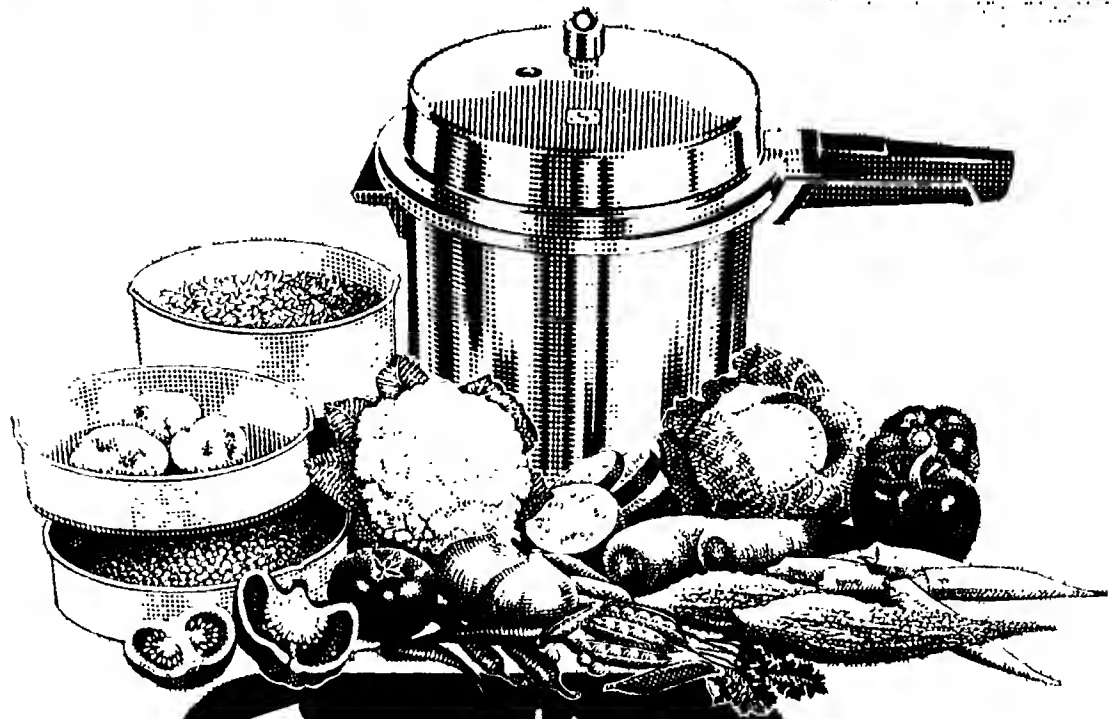
P. S. Mool Bharati, Delhi

THE article on exorcism at Mehndipur was thought-provoking. Unfortunately, in these twilight zones between fact and fantasy, science and myth, the material and immaterial, little has been investigated. A normal person with a normal mind is never, I am sure, "possessed". It is only when one is under acute emotional strain, or exposed to natural and lonely surroundings, such as the area

8 reasons why...



**India's first pressure cooker
is still India's most widely used
pressure cooker**



Prestige

T T. (Private) Ltd.
BANGALORE 560 016.

around a crematorium that devils enter the body. A combination of phenomena—like frightening noises and eerie sights—weakens the soul and helps devils to “possess” it. One can prevent this by simply refusing to be scared. It is a fact that the common mind finds acceptance of demons far easier than acceptance of gods. One is easier swayed by stories of Satan, and movies like *Omen*, *Exorcist*, and *Rosemary's Baby* than by temples and idols. The reason is purely human susceptibility.
T. R. Ramalingam, Calcutta

THE special report on devils was spine-chilling. After reading it, one is not sure whether or not to believe in the existence of demons. Many experiments are being conducted to find if they exist; scientists were even able to photograph a “devil” with a “Kirlian” camera. Going by one line of reasoning, if there is god, one presumes there must be a demon too.

S. Narasimha Rao, Paradip

Ali's prayer

THIS refers to S. A. Vecrapandian's letter (March 2) on Mohammad Ali's prayer. When Ali said that the “praise of god is the prescription of man”, he meant that men possessed both bad and good character. When one is under bad influence, he should pray to god to set himself right. God never created man to pray to him. When a man acts as a man, he will surely transcend all divisive forces—of caste, religion, language and nationality.
M. Appaswami, Visakhapatnam.

Adivasis' enemies

THE letter “Are adivasis expendable?” (March 9) by A. K. Roy, MP, is a challenge to the so-called democratic Left forces of West Bengal. The fact is that most Left Front leaders belong to the “babu” and “bhadralok” class and are opposed to the leadership of the working class and poor tribals. For this reason none of them raised their voice when an adivasi was killed by police firing. The adivasi movement deserves full support from every quarter. In Hura, Pancha, Manbazar, Kashipur, Para, Adra, Raghunathpur, Santuri and Neturi in the Purulia district of West Bengal the adivasis are fighting for the restoration of land to tribals, revision of the list of scheduled tribes and punishment of moneylenders. Instead of helping the poor tribals, the CPI (M) is supporting the jotedars of the areas. I agree with Mr Roy that an all-Party probe into the police firing is necessary, because tribals are restive and determined to get justice. The conditions that caused the famous Chhara revolt, Santal insurrection, Kol unrest and the Birsa revolt might well be repeated. I salute the martyr Raghav Murmu who was a victim of the neo-colonialist “babu revolutionaries.”
P. P. Mahato, Purulia

Time to retire

THE item in “Dehli diary” (February 24) about the lowering of pensionable age from 58 to 55 for Union Government employees is heartening. The measure could go a long way to easing the problem of unemployment. After reaching the age of 55, most employees devote their energies to amassing wealth by fair means or foul before they attain

superannuation. This is true for both the lower and higher rungs of the bureaucracy. If three lakh jobs could be given to young people who are jobless by making the older staff retire, it would greatly help the quality of work in Government offices, as well as the economy. The scheme should be applicable to all state Government employees and necessary Constitutional amendments should be made to facilitate this.
Rajan Chetian, Hyderabad.

Policing prices

THIS refers to Kewal Varma's cover story “Can Mrs Gandhi stop rising prices?” (March 2). My answer to the question is that she cannot stop rising prices without another emergency. Between 1972 and 1977, 20 business houses including the Tatas, Birlas, and Mafatlal made strenuous efforts to expand their empires. This resulted in rising prices and Mrs Gandhi responded by enacting the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) in Parliament and declaring the Emergency.

The Central Government has already dissolved nine non-Congress (I) state Governments. The obvious reason for the step is that the country needs a stable Government for proper economic management. There is grave concern about the economy, with the prices of essential commodities showing no signs of falling. The main responsibility rests with the Central Government. Even after two months in power, the Government has not given the economy any serious thought. In Assam, cultivators are selling their potatoes at 40 paise a kilo. The violent agitation against foreigners and the consequent heavy loss of life and property have worsened the lot of the common man.
Bipul Chandra Khound, Digboi

MRS GANDHI is making frantic appeals to the state officials to arrest all blackmarketeers and hoarders, as though policemen hold the key to inflation. Actually, the precise factors responsible for sugar being available in the free market at the control price of Rs 2.15 p in 1977, and those responsible for the price rise from

Rs 4.50 p a kilo during the caretaker Government's regime to Rs. 6-7 per kilo during Mrs Gandhi's rule are too difficult to be defined by the world's greatest economists. And yet, Mrs Gandhi wants everyone to believe that she can control prices in the same way as she could garner votes, by simply displaying her “hand”. To camouflage her incompetence, the radio keeps blurring out, night and day, that prices are falling and strong steps are being taken to bring them down. If the Janata can be charged with “non-performance” for its failures on the economic front, the present regime can be considered incompetent in dealing with the same problems. Yet, the Press and other media are averse to pointing out the truth.

The wary know that so far as economic problems are concerned, choosing between a Congress (I) and non-Congress (I) Government is just like choosing between tweedledes and tweedledum, because neither is capable of pulling off a miracle like that of post-war Germany. Let alone miracles, they are not even capable of maintaining existing levels of the economy. We have no Ludwig Erhard here, instead just hordes of gullible people, who believe in faith-cures and the hand symbol.

Even during the Emergency, Mrs Gandhi could not arrest the price rise. How can one expect her to do so in normal times? She always relied on strongarm measures to secure even small benefits for the poor, whereas a better administrator would rather rely on smaller measures to secure greater benefits.
K. Kumara Sakhar, Eluru (Andhra Pradesh).

A prescription

THE report on a wrong eye operation on three-year-old Nazreen at Hyderabad “An irreparable error” (March 9) was tragic. The loss to little Nazreen and her family cannot be made good. Such a case of doctors' negligence might have been the first of its kind at the Sarojini Devi Hospital, but callousness and carelessness are not uncommon among the medical profession in India. Since a medical career is very lucrative, doctors have become greedy and selfish. A strict code of conduct should be prescribed for doctors and medical courts should be set up so as to ensure that this noble profession beco-

mes what it should be—a service to humanity, not a trade.
M. A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

THE two doctors in question who operated Nazreen's wrong eye, without identifying the disease, unsure about which of the two eyes was affected, and consulting experts or other doctors in a hospital of such repute, destroyed Nazreen's eyesight. In their zeal to test their abilities, the two doctors might have doomed the life of the poor child. Even suspending them now will not comfort Nazreen's parents. The medical authorities should assume full charge of the child and save her from further complications.
Md Amanullah, Chaibasa, Singhbhum

A ROUTINE hydraulic check for the primary coolant tube of the Tarapur nuclear reactor around the first week of March soon precipitated a major crisis. A core meltdown was not just a theoretical possibility—the horrors of the Three Mile Island crisis loomed large in the reactor halls, matched only by the vivid images of the “China Syndrome.” A small crack (pin hole!) was detected in the coolant tube. An immediate solution was to remove the two feet long cracked tube and weld in a new piece of pipe.

To do this, however, is not easy. The primary coolant tube carries hot radioactive water from the reactor core and a small crack is enough to drain out sufficient radioactive water contaminating the area in a flash of a second. Slow but steady leakage would invariably lead to a fall in the water level of the reactor core, causing the temperature of the core to shoot up relentlessly. This would bring up the temperature to an awesome several thousand degrees—the fission energy pumping up the temperature even further. A core meltdown would then become inevitable. The standard procedure to check the outpour of hot radioactive water is to seal off the tube for a short while and weld in the crack. The sealing in Tarapur was done by using an “ice plug” of liquid nitrogen, penetrating deep inside the tube, hopefully withholding the pressure of water for a sufficiently long time.

The “accident” on March 14 at 8 a.m. occurred when the “ice plug” did not remain inside the coolant tube long enough and was pushed out by the gushing water, after the bad pipe was cut out and before the new pipe was welded in. A temporary plug of a sort was then somehow pushed in and held in position by chains. The gush was controlled but the trickle wasn’t. In the initial gush an awful lot of hot radioactive water came out on the hall floor, causing panic and hysteria. The level of water in the core by that time had already gone down and this was the moment when all hell broke loose. By the time the gush was controlled by plugs chained inside the tube the place was reeking with activity, at the same time threatening the core to gallop to a fission hot temperature. (The China syndrome was surely not far off!) A routine check, some careless decisions, mistiming, lack of precision, a slightly longer delay than allowed by a reactor handbook, within minutes, can

COVER STORY

transform a simple routine job to a nerve shattering, horrifying crisis, the magnitude of which, frankly, has no precedence yet.

Simple questions remain unanswered. Why did the “ice plug” come out? Was it a simple error in estimating the potential pressure of the hot water or was it because of that insufferably familiar attitude, “Chalta hai”? What was the reason for the delay between the coming out of the ice plug and putting in a temporary plug, pulled up by chain? Who is responsible for the hydraulic testing? Was it just a pin hole crack or a large crack, large enough for the hot water to seep out incessantly? A little bit of water on the reactor floor. Is it not just an old story after all. In India there is always water all over the place, particularly where there is no need for water.

It must be said that eventually there was no “mishap” but there sure was an accident. The radiation received by the engineers, it is said, should not cause any alarm. In a country where life is dirt cheap a few radiation patients cause no outrage. The whole business just gets forgotten. The other issues take over the headlines. But there are those individuals who probably still don’t know what is in store for them. Radiation hazards don’t show up in hospital beds overnight. They take their toll very often after the hue and cry turns to indifference.

The Tarapur power station is one of the most polluted nuclear reactors in the world. The situation now has gone much beyond measured statements and patriotic assertions in the Lok Sabha. The turnover rate of the workers in the most polluted areas is fantastic. The workers are chosen from a stratum of society where fighting for one’s rights is just a theoretical dream. Between the official statements and the reality there lies a huge pack of manicured false statements.

Never before in India has so much been written about the subject with so little effect—the Tarapur syndrome. A uranium enriched light water reactor, it is perennially dependant on

the grace of a foreign country. It is also the only reactor in the country which is working, albeit at a slow pace, with cracking by-pass tubes, cancerous engineers, little puddles of radioactive water under a callous and plainly inefficient management. In their air conditioned glamour, the Power Project Engineering Division sit pretty in Bombay. Statements couched in elegant language for the consumption of the public and the Lok Sabha are the only job of these top management people. The hard-working, breathless engineers only end up with heart attacks and incurable insomnia.

The larger questions involving nuclear policy in the country, it appears, still remain to be answered with any degree of consistency. With all the investment, why is there no adequate supply of heavy water? How is it that the Prime Minister can confidently say that we are making progress and can face up to any challenge posed by Pakistan? Do we have enough plutonium to manufacture an atomic bomb in even the next 12 months? In a sense the USA would do India a great service if it stopped supplying the much-needed uranium-235 for Tarapur. It is known in knowledgeable circles that the oxide fuel is good enough to run Tarapur and once the USA stops supplying the fuel, there is nothing to stop India from going ahead and using the reprocessing plant in Tarapur. (At the moment, according to the Indo-US contract, the used rods of the reactor are the entire property of the US Government and India cannot therefore use the reprocessing plant to extract plutonium.) Once one can use the reactor rods and reprocess them here, there would hopefully be no dearth of plutonium. The Kalpakkam reactor would get off the ground and any infusion would be only a question of time.

Would that happen? Is it really that simple? The first question is a political one. The answer to that has nothing to do with the state of nuclear technology here or the efficiency with which our nuclear establishments are run. But the answer to the second question is that if we do not tighten our belts the access to the reprocessing plant may not be all that great. A simple pin hole crack may lead to a gigantic torrent of radioactive water! That kind of a state of affairs is inconsistent with the image of high-powered nuclear technology tied up with clockwork precision.

By A SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

ACCIDENT AT TARAPUR

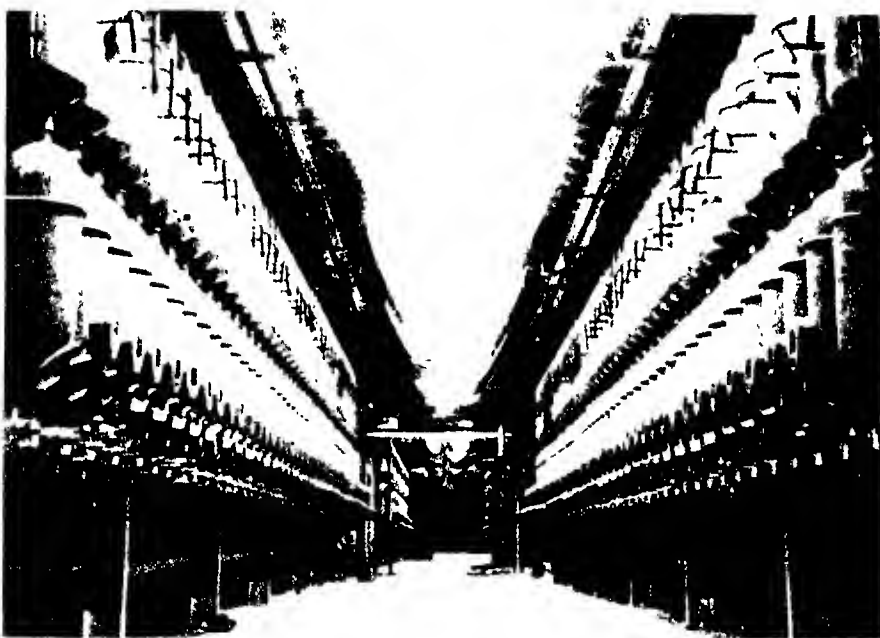
Department of Atomic Energy in the doldrums

By OLGA TELLIS

IS India's nuclear programme hooked helplessly to a distant, elusive dream, or is it a gigantic gas balloon that will burst under pressure of its own tall claims? One feels the day of reckoning is at hand from all the answers given in the recently concluded session of Parliament, the excuses offered by the chairman of the Department of Atomic Energy, Mr Homi Sethna, in his marathon Manaraja Sayajirao Memorial lectures and several other facts that have come to light.

In the memorial lectures delivered at Baroda last month, Mr Homi Sethna said "In formulating our strategy for nuclear power development we had to take into account that while our uranium reserves are rather meagre, our thorium reserves are among the largest in the world. We thus chalked out a programme which was not based on the model of the western countries but tailored to our own conditions. The strategy envisaged the construction of natural uranium fuelled reactors in the first phase, followed by fast breeder reactors in the second phase, using plutonium produced from the first phase reactors. This would eventually be followed by reactors based on the self-sustaining thorium-uranium cycle".

By these stated objectives, nuclear power stations and heavy water plants for these stations form the core of the first phase of the country's atomic energy programme. Today more than 20 years after these objectives were first stated, the first phase is a sitting duck, yet to get off the ground. To say it's a total failure would be rather harsh in the light of the fact that "an advanced science and technology, drawing upon a still developing industrial base cannot of course be expected to have a smooth course towards its goal and India's nuclear efforts have had to face difficulties in this regard". But the fact remains that the authorities of DAE (Department of Atomic Energy) were well aware of the archaic structure on which they were trying to impose the superstructure of advanced science and technology. They were also aware of the "pulls and pressures of realpolitik" which India has had to contend with increasingly. So at best today these look like lame excuses for sophisticated, expensive programmes that have still to justify their existence.



Gallery housing the control equipment of the reactor at Tarapur

The first phase was to have four atomic power plants, namely, the Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS) which has two units, and three other stations—Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (RAPP) with two units, Madras Atomic Power Project (MAPPP) with two units, and the Narora Atomic Power Project (NAPP). Dr Homi Bhabha, considered the father of India's nuclear programme had envisaged that these stations would produce 8,000 MW of power by 1980-81. In the seventies, Vikram Sarabhai, who succeeded Dr Bhabha had slashed this figure down to 2,000 MW and now in 1980 one finds that the country has only 600 MW available from nuclear power.

What is the functioning position of the atomic power stations today? Tarapur is forcedly made to run at a reduced capacity in order to stretch and conserve the available fuel because of the continuing uncertainty over enriched uranium supplies from the USA. The output of the two units of 210 MW each has been progressively reduced from 170 MW during its fifth refuelling to around 140 MW in February 1979. Presently unit 1 has been shut down since January following a discovery of "pin hole" leaks in the bypass loop, through Dr M. R. Srinivasan, director of the Power Projects Engineering Division had said in early March that the unit

would start on March 20 and regular production of power would begin in the first week of April. But new complications have developed as scientists tried to plug the "pin hole" leaks and the unit is still shut down. Each delay is costing the nation around Rs 5 lakhs per day.

Regarding MAPPP which has two units of 235 MW each located at Kalpakkam near the shore temples of Mahabapuram, Mrs Indira Gandhi, who holds the Atomic Energy portfolio told Parliament, "The major causes for the delay in commissioning the atomic power plant in Madras are problems faced in the fabrication of major items of equipment, delays at the manufacturers works due to labour unrest and power cuts as also difficulties arising out of embargo placed by some countries on the export of certain equipment and materials." She said unit one was expected to be completed by the end of 1980 and unit two by early 1983. Commissioning would be taken up thereafter.

The career of RAPP is even more distressing. The first 220 MW unit built with Canadian collaboration presently works and shuts down frequently. According to Mr Homi Sethna, "while the Canadians were responsible for the design we retained the responsibility for construction and installation activities. Initially



Indira Gandhi visited Pokhran on December 22, 1974 accompanied by K. C. Pant, the then Minister for Energy and Dr H. C. Sethna, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission

some equipment was imported in a finished condition and later in a partly manufactured condition, with the final manufacture and assembly done in India. Initially as a result of intensified indigenisation efforts, major components such as calandria, end shields, steam generators and fuelling machines were manufactured within the country for the first time. The first unit of this station has been

in operation for nearly seven years and it is now meeting the major part of the electricity requirements of Rajasthan."

The facts, however, are not so glossy, because what is at stake is not engineering skill but the capacity to generate power. On this score RAPP one has let down Rajasthan badly. It is true that RAPP is the largest single supplier of power to

Rajasthan. It is to supply 40 lakh units a day. According to information available, it should have sent out 12,000 million KWH of power in six years ending 1979-80, but this supply has never been more than 3000 KWH. In fact, in the last six years RAPP one has never worked continuously for even three months. And its longest running stretch has been for 69 days! To be fair to Mr Sethna, we could perhaps give his point of view about the RAPP one let down. "In the early stages of operation we encountered several problems. For instance, we had turbine blade failures due to manufacture deficiencies in Canada and also losses of heavy water during on-load refuelling operations as well as losses from valves, pipes, fittings etc. As a result of these experiences we carried out several modifications and design improvements. We also faced many problems due to the instability of the regional grid and frequent severe fluctuations and frequency instabilities, which resulted in the reactor being shut down. We have done our best to adapt ourselves to this situation by making many systems less sensitive to grid instability."

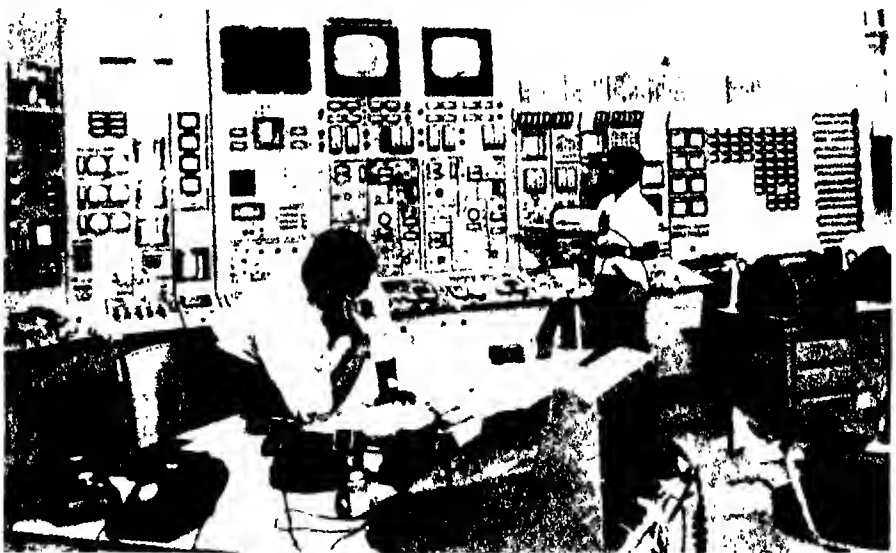
So in 1973-74 RAPP one worked to 24 per cent capacity, in 1974-75 it was 38 per cent, in 1975-76 it was 24 per cent, in 1976-77 54 per cent, 1977-78 nine per cent and 1978-79 23 per cent. RAPP two promises to be even more erratic. According to the DAE annual report for 1978-79, "unit II of this station is ready for its operations preparatory to taking in heavy water for the final stages of commissioning." It is reliably learnt that trial runs of RAPP two ended in minor accident as the tube sheets were found defective. There is also mystery around the small consignment of heavy water for the running of the plant. The heavy water is to come from the Soviet Union. Most of the required quantity has arrived and it is said a small portion is yet to come. According to some sources this has finally come, but there is no confirmation about this from authoritative sources. One can lay a wager as to whether it will be commissioned at the end of the year as the authorities promise.

The Narora plant in Uttar Pradesh is still under construction, as the Prime Minister said. The first unit will be completed in 1984 and the second in 1985. The Government has said quite categorically that the country will depend increasingly on nuclear power and the Prime Minister told the Rajya Sabha on March 27 that additional atomic plants were under consideration of the Government.

W

HICH brings the focus on to another issue—heavy water. Without heavy water the atomic power plants, excluding Tarapur, which uses natural uranium, will not be able to function. The projections made for heavy water were in the vicinity of 1000 tonnes by 1980, to be produced by four heavy water plants.

Control Room of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station



One plant was to be developed with Indian technology and the other three with the help of France, Italy and Canada. Today, besides the 14 tonnes of heavy water produced at Nangal with German collaboration, we have not added to this in the last 18 years. The heavy water plant at Baroda was commissioned in September 1977 and four months later it blew up in an accident. It has been shut down since and, according to Mr Homi Sethna, it would resume production by April 15, 1980. He said in an interview to a news agency that, "actually the plant was run on trial for about a month in February and all sections were found to be functioning satisfactorily. The plant has been shut down again briefly for a final check-up of the systems." According to Mr Sethna, "the explosion and fire at the Rs 34-crore plant in 1977 had not been an act of sabotage". He said the various agencies which had inquired into the incident had come to the conclusion that the accident was a result of the mechanical failure of an ammonia quench pipe piece at the exit of the ammonia converter. This he attributed to the poor design standards and the low quality of the metal used. Mr Sethna further said, "Many such shortcomings were noticed in the final stages of commissioning of the plant, and remedial measures had been taken. Many modifications had to be made in the equipment and some minor parts had to be replaced". According to Mrs Indira Gandhi, the loss to the heavy water plant in Baroda because of the accident was estimated at Rs 2.7 crores. The plant, she said, was expected to resume production in April 1980.

The Talcher heavy water plant is ready for commissioning, according to Mr Sethna. This plant, designed to produce 62.7 tonnes of heavy water annually, has been ready for some time because in the DAE annual report for 1978-79, it was mentioned that the Talcher plant "is expected to become operational by the end of 1979". It is now April 1980 and still in the "ready-for-commissioning" stage.

The Tuticorin heavy water plant is an interesting story. It commenced operation in 1978 and has been shut down for some time due to the shut-down of the ammonia plant of the SPIC's (Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation) fertiliser unit. It commenced production again in January 1979 but had to shut down again due to some technical problems with SPIC's ammonia plant. The Tuticorin plant is attached to the ammonia plant and if something goes wrong with the latter the former has to shut down. It can produce heavy water at the required concentration only if it works for several months without a break. This it has not been able to do because, as Mrs Gandhi told the Rajya Sabha, "the plant which began production in July last year, has been affected due to power failures, frequent interruption in supply of synthesis gas from the fertiliser plant and labour troubles".

Regarding the Kota plant, we have



Mrs Gandhi at Tarapur in October 1967

been told in the DAE annual report for 1978-79 that, "commissioning work on the Kota plant is expected to start in December 1979 with the plant likely to go on stream in the middle of 1980". One still has to hear officially about the commissioning. And now Mr Sethna says that, three more heavy water plants are to be set up in the near future. They will not necessarily be connected with fertiliser projects but may be based on the hydrogen sulphide water exchange process.

The question that comes up is on what basis is the Department of Atomic Energy making its plans? The DAE owes the country a long explanation on why its existing atomic power plants and heavy water plants are not functioning. The country has been liberal and lavish in its treatment towards the atomic energy programme. It's the country's pride and prestige. Only recently the Department revised its expenditure on atomic power plants upwards by Rs 269.41 crores and its heavy water plants expenditure by Rs 99.44 crores.

The first unit of the RAPP today costs Rs 73.27 crores against the original estimate of Rs 33.95 crores approved in 1964. RAPP two will cost Rs 92.26 crores against the original Rs. 58.16 crores. The cost of MAPP one has been revised upward from Rs. 61.78 crores to Rs 107.87 crores and MAPP two from Rs 70.63 crores to Rs 103.02 crores. The cost of the two units at Narora have been revised from Rs 209.89 crores to Rs 327.40 crores. The cost of the heavy water plants at Kota, Baroda, Talcher and Tuticorin will now be over Rs 189 crores against the original estimate of Rs 94.56 crores. The fast breeder test reactor which seems an even more distant dream than the power plants and the heavy water plants will cost Rs 58.72 crores against the original Rs 35 crores.

The utter failure of the heavy water plants which will be supposed to run the first stage reactors and the dismal performance of the ato-

mic power projects has created a cuman of other problems that are bringing into question the very fundamentals on which Indian science has been organised. If RAPP, MAPP, and TAPS and the heavy water plants had worked according to schedule, they would have created a whole lot of jobs. There would have been so many more responsible positions that scientists could have been appointed to. Today, because of the lack of positions for upward mobility, top scientists are stagnating or leaving the Department. The country is losing manpower from this sophisticated area and all that the authorities are doing are restricting people from applying for positions outside. The Power Project Engineering Division (PrED) of the DAE has received a demand from its officers' association for permission to apply for outside jobs as in other Government Departments. It is a disturbing development that the cream of Indian scientists in what was once a prestigious department, should want to leave.

The Prime Minister had informed Parliament that an internal panel had been set up by the Secretary of the DAE to review the Department's administrative and management procedures and practices. In fact, there is nothing new about this committee. It had been set up in August 1979 and the BARCOA (Bhabha Atomic Research Centre Officers' Association) had already made its suggestions. The officers have also sent Mrs Indira Gandhi a memorandum asking essentially for a revision of the civil service conduct rules. They want a debate on how harmful the present rules are to a smooth and effective functioning of the DAE. These rules were made by the British for controlling their subordinate staff and not scientists or scientific Departments. Yet these are the rules by which scientific officers are being harassed. For instance, the officers feel that the so called "pin hole" leaks at Tarapur could have been rectified by

now had the officers been taken into confidence. When the first leaks appeared, some engineers had suggested that the wisest thing to do under the circumstances would have been to take out the fuel rods and empty the calandria because then heavy water would not have been needed, taken safely. But they were overruled. Today the authorities are dismissing the mishap to Tarapur on March 14 while they were in the process of plugging the "pin hole" leaks and cracks in the by-pass line.

A SECTION of scientists are bitter over the way the "pin hole leaks" at Tarapur have been handled by Mr Sethna and his colleagues. This is a never-ending controversy, particularly because the unit which has been shut down since November 1979, first for refuelling and then because of the discovery of the pin hole leaks, is hardly likely to start functioning in the very near future. Since it is past the March 20 deadline, the only way out would be to appoint a third party, an independent body like the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of the United States, to give its opinion on the happenings at Tarapur. Today the authorities sit on judgment on their own work and they are hardly likely to condemn or find fault with themselves. Since they always cite the cases of Japan, USA and Spain, it would only be fair to have an independent watchdog body as these countries have. In fact, there is a very strong case for a total review and reassessment of the aims, objectives and achievements of the Departments of Atomic Energy. The main issue is why we have not succeeded in the principal areas of the atomic energy programme. Dr M. R. Srinivasan, the director of PPED, has said that Tarapur has produced electricity of the value of Rs 200 crores and was responsible for the creation of gross domestic product to the tune of Rs 10,000 crores. Granted this is so, but how much has the delay in the commissioning of the other plants cost the nation. Had we had the 2,700 mw installed capacity by this year as projected, we would have had another Rs 40,000-50,000 crores of GNP and Rs 1,000 crores of electricity.

Till 1970 we had a large number of projects that were a success. There was the Apsara, the plutonium plant, Cirus, the nuclear reactor, the nuclear fuel complex, and the Zerlina test reactor and Tarapur which was a turnkey project, and the Nangal heavy water plant with the Germans on a turnkey basis. Then in the seventies everything started to go wrong. Except the Pokhran implosion all the major projects have not been completed or are not running successfully. Unless the country faces up to the reality and stops treating atomic energy as a sacred cow rather than a commercial proposition, our nuclear programmes will remain hitched to a big splendid pile-in-the-sky.

The meltdown nightmare FACT

THE sirens began whooping before dawn. That was a little over a year ago, on March 28, 1979, when alarm lights flashed red on instrument panels in the control room of Metropolitan Edison's Unit 2. Few people outside the United States had heard of Three Mile Island prior to the incident, but the sirens had heralded the worst accident in the history of US nuclear power production. Today, souvenir hunters at Three Mile Island can stop and buy T-shirts that read "Happiness is a cool reactor", or ceramic lamps shaped like cooling towers, but the scars are still there to see.

The huge turbine of Unit 2, capable of generating 880 megawatts of electricity, had tripped (shut down automatically) as the steam that turned it had somehow been shut off. This was no cause to worry, for technicians believed that it would be easy to locate and correct. As things turned out, though, they could not have been more wrong. The reactor of Unit 2 produced heat by nuclear fission and giant pumps pushed water heated by the reactor to two towering steam generators. Within the generators, heat from the reactor's pressurised water loops was "exchanged" through tiny tubes to a second water loop that produced steam. This steam drove turbines that turned generators to send 880,000 kilowatts of electricity humming out over high-tension wires. But the complex machinery of Unit 2 remained silent.

It soon became clear what had happened. A pump on a generating system had shut down, cutting off water to the steam generator. The reactor, however, kept producing heat, raising the temperature of the water in the primary reactor system. When the pressure reached 2,350 pounds per square inch, 200 psi above normal, the reactor automatically shut down. Boron control rods dropped into the core to "poison" and finally close down the fission process. A valve on the pressuriser opened as planned but failed to close, with the result that radioactive water gushed into the "quench tank" and overflowed to flood the floor of the containment structure. Some radiation—it is not known how much—penetrated the walls of the structure at this stage. Meanwhile, the



An employee of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant checks radiation monitor

pressure and water level in the reactor system began to drop, thereby triggering the emergency cooling system. But an operator flipped a switch, shutting it off and some of the fuel rods melted in the process.

The sump pump transferred the radioactive water to a nearby auxiliary building, which flooded, venting radioactive steam. Radioactive water was dumped into the Susquehanna River the next day, while further radioactive material was released from the auxiliary building. The final and most dangerous stage came when a radioactive gas bubble formed at the top of the reactor, raising the danger of a possible "meltdown". In theory, according to experts, this would involve the reactor core melting its way through the steel walls of the reactor vessel and penetrating the floor of the containment structure. The core could drop into the water coolant at the bottom of its chamber, or burn through the even thicker concrete base and deep into the

earth. In either case, lethally radioactive gases would be released, causing a nuclear catastrophe.

To all intents and purposes, the radioactive core was damaged during the first moments of the accident. This interfered with the cooling process and the massive heat generated damaged half the 36,816 nuclear fuel rods. In addition, highly flammable hydrogen gas began accumulating inside the huge containment structure holding the reactor, posing the threat of a conventional explosion that could scatter dangerous radioactive gas and debris over a wide area.

In Harrisburg, Governor Thornburgh asked all residents within a ten-mile radius of Three Mile Island to remain inside their homes with their windows closed. Then he urged pregnant women and young children within a five-mile radius to move out, and ordered all schools closed. Finally he advised the four countries in the area, with a total population of 900,000 people, to ready themselves for evacuation. Finally Harrisburg airport was closed for several hours because of the radiation hazard.

Repair work, it is estimated, will cost Metropolitan Edison nearly \$ 400 million, even though it is several months behind schedule. There are 600,000 gallons of radioactive water that remain, covering the floor of the containment building to a height of seven feet, although the radiation level has dropped from a searing 30,000 rems per hour to a merely dangerous 200 rems just above the surface of the water. "We haven't made as much progress as we had hoped," said Robert Arnold, Vice-President of Metropolitan Edison. For starters, Met-Ed were severely criticised by local and state officials for not giving a true assessment of the enormity of the situation. In addition, plant personnel have been found guilty of misinterpreting their instrument readings, overriding automatic safety systems and shutting off the core-cooling system too early. Finally—and most serious—a report by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has suggested that Unit 2 came closer to "meltdown" than Met-Ed officials realised at the time of the accident.

As if that is not all, NRC feels that Met-Ed might not be able to meet the total cleanup bill and has ordered a study of options if Met-Ed goes bankrupt. In addition, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission will

deliver its verdict this month on whether Met-Ed's operating certificate should be revoked. If it is, no one seems to know who will take over the awesome task of cleaning up Three Mile Island.

FICTION

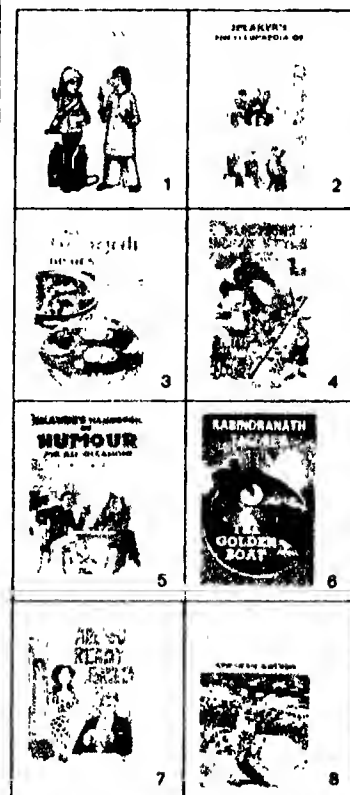
THE movie *The China Syndrome* could not have been released at a better time. Three Mile Island took place a few days after the film opened at theatres throughout the United States. The strange thing about the whole affair was that fact was indeed grimmer than fiction. The obscure title derives from the theory that, were a reactor core to lose its liquid coolant, it would burn its way through the floor, into the earth and continue all the way to China.

It wouldn't really, though. In such an event, the core would meet the water under the earth's surface, thereby releasing quantities of radioactive steam, so the Chinese have nothing to worry about. Jane Fonda and Michael Douglas play a TV newscaster and cameraman assigned to a nuclear plant to do a routine segment in a series on energy. Even while the duo watch the control room from the glass-enclosed visitors' gallery, a nuclear "accident" occurs and the cameraman films the whole report, unknown to anyone.

By the time Fonda and Douglas get back to their TV station, they find that the plant's PR man has succeeded in persuading the news director that what had happened was not worth reporting. So the latter sits on it. Douglas, the cameraman (who pronounces "nuclear" as "nukular") steals the film and gets expert opinion, from evidence on the screen, that the plant nearly blew up. Fonda then tries to convince the nuclear control-room manager to help them to expose what really happened that day. They run into heavy-calibre opposition in the form of the power company's chief.

One of the veteran engineers in the control room, whose role is played by Jack Lemmon, joins in the action. He is a firm believer in nuclear power as well as the elaborate Fail-Safe system which makes its peaceful use feasible. But his superiors push him a little too hard to recommission the plant faster than he thinks it should be. Lemmon, meanwhile, discovers that the contractors who built the plant falsified their vital safety certificates. There follows an attempted murder and Lemmon seizes the plant singlehanded, while Fonda stands by to put his damning evidence on TV live.

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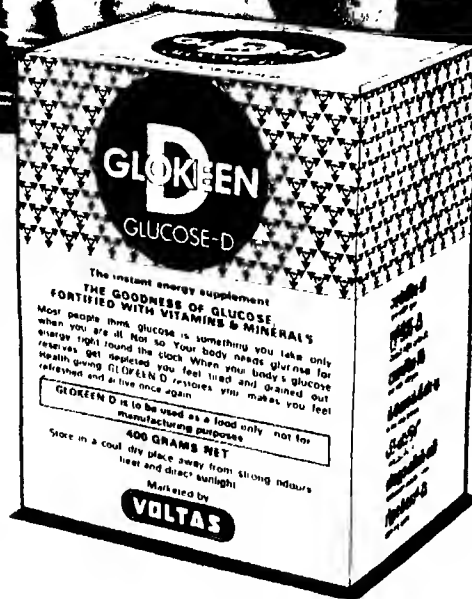
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Fiddling with national unity

EVEN the worst critics of Mrs Indira Gandhi had believed that whatever may be her failings on any other score, she would outshine the Janata in statecraft, in the conduct of foreign policy and in handling matters of national unity. This belief was based on Mrs Gandhi's record. As Congress president, she resolved the Maharashtra-Gujarat tangle in 1958, as an ordinary Central Minister of Information, she applied the healing touch when anti-Hindi riots broke out in Tamil Nadu in 1965, and as Prime Minister she brought Sheikh Abdullah back into the national mainstream by making him renounce his plebiscite slogan, and started sorting out problems of integrating the north-eastern region with the rest of the country. In a way it was a tribute to Mrs Gandhi's understanding of the problems of national unity that in 1977, when she was routed in the Hindi heartland, the south stood by her.

When Mrs Gandhi took back the reins of Government, there was a refreshing new initiative in Assam. She started a dialogue. It was to be expected that there would be no easy solution. Such a situation requires patience, understanding, tactful handling without conceding on the basic point of national unity. Of all persons, Mrs Gandhi should have known this with her rich experience of handling such situations. But something happened and Mrs Gandhi suddenly adopted a tough posture. The sequence of events is like this. The youthful general secretary of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee lands in the capital a day after it was announced on March 12 that the talks between Assam student leaders and Union Home Minister Zail Singh had deadlocked. He meets Sanjay Gandhi. The idea of an economic blockade of Assam is born. Subrata then meets Mrs Gandhi. It is said that she only listened to Subrata and remarked, "Kuch to karna hoga (something has to be done) but it should be peaceful". Subrata flies back to Calcutta the same evening. In three days the blockade agitation starts. West Bengal Pradesh Congress president Ajit Panja is in the dark. West Bengal leaders in Delhi are not taken into confidence. Hence both Ajit Panja and A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury publicly express disapproval of the agitation. Pranab Mukherjee follows the golden rule of discretion being the better part of valour.



By KEWAL VARMA

When confronted in Parliament on March 21, Mrs Gandhi takes an equivocal position. "I cannot ignore the genuine feelings of West Bengal." Subrata feels emboldened. He rushes back to Delhi, meets Sanjay twice on March 22, first with Ajit Panja and Ghani Khan Choudhury and then with Ajit Panja alone. Later he meets the Prime Minister also. Ajit Panja is now a changed person. He goes back to Calcutta and supports the agitation. Mrs Gandhi throws away the garb of equivocation and virtually justifies the blockade in Parliament on March 26.

It is not only in this case that Mrs Gandhi has adopted such a course. She has also reportedly encouraged Gundu Rao to articulate the territorial dispute between Karnataka and Kerala over Kasargod. Fortunately, the Kasargod problem does not have as dangerous potential as the blockade agitation has. The blockade agitation obviously has a limited objective. This is to create a law and order problem in West Bengal which in turn could create conditions for Central intervention in the State. It is not certain whether the organisers of the blockade will succeed in this. But, it could certainly arouse the latent resentment of Bengalis towards Assamese. Mrs Gandhi has thus encouraged a move which will put the two sub-nationalities of the country on collision course.

Conceptually, an economic blockade is the last step before declaring war on a hostile people. Can we afford to treat Assam in this fashion? The problem has to be viewed in the proper perspective. Over a period of time the Assamese have been reduced to a minority in their own home state. The Assamese slept over this and the national leadership did not care. An eventual boiling over was natural. Many malevolent forces are obviously trying to fish in troubled waters. The RSS is trying to give it a Hindu-Muslim colour. Some foreign countries are trying

to accentuate the unsettling effect. The Assamese landed gentry is trying to exploit the movement against their occupancy tenants who are mostly immigrant Bengalis. But all this cannot be used to bypass the central issue, namely the genuine fears of the dominant ethnic community seeing themselves getting obliterated.

The problems of fusing a multi-lingual and multi-social people into one nation are stupendous. The Assam problem can be better appreciated if one fact is taken into account. Assam was never a part of the Moghul Empire. The Moghuls did not cross the Brahmaputra. The East India Company made Assam a part of India only in 1892. In other words, the history of Assam as part of this country is only 150 years old.

The problem of ethnic minorities could be appreciated from the experience of the UK. It has a long history in the modern period. It is a small country with a high level of industrialisation which ensured high mobility of its population. It has a unitary form of Government. Yet in 1974, when I visited Britain I saw Scottish nationalism on the march. At Aberdeen, when I was mixing water with single malt whisky, my host told me: "Single malt whisky should preferably be taken neat. If for the sake of taste, you want to dilute it then mix Scottish water, never English water." Then one of my Scottish guides said: "I have three sisters, one of them married an Englishman. I have not forgiven her for that, and have never visited her since her marriage."

The "blockade response" to the Assam agitation will only harden feelings of Assamese nationalism. In addition all the seven sisters of the north-east are in turmoil. Mrs Gandhi should know that with confrontationist politics pursued by her on vital domestic issues, there will not be any national consensus behind her in the game, particularly when its immediate aim is to dislodge the West Bengal Government. Also it is too tempting for some foreign countries, particularly the USA and China, to help the process of destabilisation of the north-eastern region. The problems of national unity are too delicate to be left to "Doon-School boys" (Kamal Nath is the latest to support the blockade agitation). In the first three months of her rule, Mrs Gandhi has not covered herself with glory in handling vital socio-economic domestic issues. Let her not go down also as the disrupter of national unity.

Did the Express break the law?

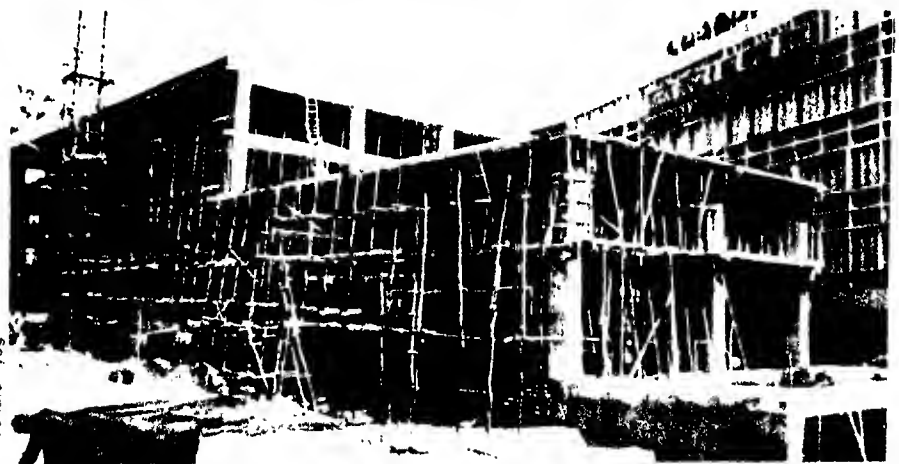
A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT reports

DELHI'S Press area is situated on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, the road named after the last of the great Moghuls in the Indraprastha area of New Delhi. The area is rich in history. The name 'Indraprastha' has been given to it because it is supposed to have been the site of its namesake in the Mahabharata era. The area is just off the Ferozeshah Kotla fort and the famous cricket ground which is the venue of Test matches. The walled city of Shahjahanabad is a stone's throw away. Opposite the present Press area was the former jail of Delhi where many freedom fighters had been kept by the British (what area is now part of a medical college). In this Press area, very near the 'khoomi darwaza' on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg (where the British had done to death two sons of Zafar) stands the *Indian Express* building, which has become the focal point of a new epic war between the Congress (I) regime and a newspaper management.

The battle which is taking place in this area now is between the Lt. Governor (Uparajyapal) of Delhi, Jagmohan, and Ramnath Goenka, the ageing patriarch of the *Indian Express* group the largest newspaper chain in the country. The sword of Damocles hangs over the new building of the *Express* coming up before the old one. The controversy gives rise to the speculation that all officials of the new regime are not serious about Mrs Gandhi's assurance of administering a 'healing touch' to the strife-torn nation.

The war was sparked off by the Uparajyapal on the evening of March 1. He summoned a special Press conference and announced that he was appointing a three-member committee headed by W. Snaiza, chief secretary of Delhi, to inquire into "irregularities" in the sanction of the plan for the new building of *Indian Express*. According to Jagmohan, the management of *Indian Express*, by virtue of its close links with the erstwhile Janata Government (because of Ramnath Goenka's proximity to JP as well as the role of *Indian Express* in openly supporting the JP movement and later the Janata Party and Government), had got a plan approved by the relevant authorities for the new building in violation of the master plan of Delhi and municipal bylaws.

Jagmohan's charges centred around four points. First, he said that the floor-area ratio (the ratio between the built up area and the area of the plot) of the two buildings of the *Express* put together would come to 360, whereas the building bylaws only permitted a ratio of 300. Second, no provision for a car park had been made in the plan and due to increased commercial activity in the area following the construction of the building, there would be more traffic congestion. Third, Jagmohan



The new Express building before the old

alleged that the newspaper management was building 23,000 square feet more floor area than the plan allowed for. Fourth, it was alleged that the sanctioned plan had been violated by the construction of an upper basement (a deck above the basement but below the ground floor).

While appointing the Shaiza committee to go into the alleged irregularities in the construction of the building, the Uparajyapal made it clear that if the premises were found to be irregular, then the possibility of the building or part of it being demolished could not be ruled out. He also said that the *Express* management would be able to earn anything upto Rs 75 lakhs as rent from the new building after it had been constructed. The Uparajyapal did not stop at that.

After the Press conference on March 1, he issued Press statements on the subject subsequently on March 4 and 8 which were despatched through special couriers to newspaper offices. Finally on March 12 he summoned a Press conference again and announced that the Shaiza panel had held *Indian Express* guilty of irregularities and for having violated the lease agreement, the master plan of Delhi and municipal bylaws. The consequences of the findings could be anything, ranging from demolition of the whole or a part of the new building to the Government 'reentering' that portion of the compound of *Indian Express* in Delhi where the unauthorised construction has taken place in violation of the lease agreement.

The *Indian Express* management should not have been taken unaware by the findings of the Snaiza panel, for all the members were subordinate officers of the Uparajyapal and right from the beginning the *Express* management had been maintaining that the Uparajyapal's action was prompted by 'collateral interests and

political vendetta'. But a warning of the possible shape of things to come had come to the *Express* management on March 11 itself, when it had received a notice from the Union Works and Housing Ministry (headed by Prakash Chand Sethi) asking them to show cause within 30 days as to why the Government should not reenter the leased property in view of the construction of the 'additional block' by the *Express*. The notice warned: "If no satisfactory cause was shown, further action to reenter upon the premises will be taken without any further reference to you." What will be the fate of the new building, in which the *Express* group reportedly has plans of starting a new Hindi daily?

WHILE the Shaiza panel has held the *Express* management guilty of violating a number of laws, the explanation given by the *Express* management to the various allegations against it ought to be put on record, especially because for some 'strange reason' the daily newspapers have given a rather lukewarm treatment to this assault on a fellow newspaper management and the *Express'* version has virtually gone unnoticed.

The idea of the present Press area on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg was suggested to Jawaharlal Nehru by none other than Ramnath Goenka who was very close to Gandhiji because of his links in the South. The idea was to give newspaper managements sites at subsidised rates and to set up an Indian version of London's Fleet Street. The *Express* was initially given the cornermost plot near the Tilak Bridge where Pyarelal Bhavan stands today, but Pyarelal, who too was very close to Gandhiji, fancied the site and Nehru asked Goenka to take the corner-

most plot on the other extreme, adjacent to the Ferozeshah Kotla. When the plans were being formalised, it was suddenly found that there was an ancient municipal drain which passed under that area. The *Express*, therefore, was given two plots and told to build a somewhat triangular building on plots number nine and ten of Bahadurshah Zafar Marg so as not to disturb the drain which ran diagonally across the two plots allotted to the *Express*. Half of the plot allotted the *Express* in 1952, therefore, was left vacant. There was no masterplan formulated for Delhi when the construction of the buildings in the Press area commenced in the early Fifties and therefore the concept of leaving 'setbacks' (some open space in the plot after construction) was not there and all the buildings except the *Express* (which had to perforce level open space because of the drain) were built from edge to edge and no setbacks were left on those plots. It is an irony of history that the original agreement between the *Express* and the Delhi authorities was signed in 1952 on behalf of the *Express* by its then general manager, M. Feroze Gandhi.

The floor-area ratio of the original *Express* building being 500, when the *Express* management took the plans for sanction to the Janata Government, they were told that they could not build the new building to the 60-feet height (which is the normal height allowed for all buildings in the area) because then the combined floor-area ratio of the two buildings put together would be much higher than the prescribed limit. As a compromise, they were told to forego one floor of the new building (that is, have it one floor shorter than the other buildings so as to have a floor-area ratio of 360 for the entire plot, taking both the buildings together. The *Express* management sources point out that the floor-area ratio of 300 has not been followed in many places. They say that the Delhi Vikas Pradhikaran (DDA) building in the Indraprastha area, the Vikas Minar, has a floor-area ratio of 450. Some other newspaper offices, situated only 200 yards away from the *Express* have a ratio of 380. They also quote from the sanction letter of the DDA, written by R. D. Gohar, joint director (buildings) in 1978. In that letter, (No: F3 (22) '78 Buildings) Gohar has stated that an overall floor-area ratio of 360 is permitted for the plots with the *Express* and that the installation of Press machinery in the basement will enable the basement to be exempt from being included in the calculation of the floor-area ratio.

As regards parking space, the *Express* sources point out that its building is the only one in the Press area which has service lanes on all four sides and in addition, there is a huge ground next to it near the Ferozeshah Kotla, which is earmarked for parking in the area plans of the corporation. All other newspaper offices in the area have service lanes on two or three sides only. The

concept of a 'setback' not being in vogue during the time when the Press area was built in the Fifties, no building has provided for a car park. The *Express* has provided 5,000 square feet for a car park next to the new building, it is pointed out. *Express* sources further point out that in the sanction letter, Gohar of DDA had said: "Parking on the service road is permitted in the same manner as it is for other buildings in this line". Jagmohan's charge on this score, therefore, appears to be untenable.

As regards the allegation that the construction has been done in excess of the sanctioned area, the *Express* sources say that prior to constructing the new building the management had to realign the old drain at their cost (Rs 6 lakhs) so as to make it pass along the four walls of the compound. While the drain was being realigned, the old brick drain burst and flooded the entire area on which the new construction is going on. In order to save the foundations of the old building (built in 1958) and also to ensure that the service lane in front does not cave in, the triangular plot of land which had been left vacant in the original scheme was dug up to 14 feet and fortified with concrete. A major part of this area is now forming a part of the new building and the Uparajpal's objection that the basement has been built in excess of the sanctioned plan and that the basement is extending out of the plinth area of the building perhaps stems from this. The *Express* sources claim that the 9,000 square feet of excess built area adjacent to the basement of the new building will not be utilised as an extension of the basement of the new building but instead it will be used partly as a water tank for the municipal water supply to the building and partly as a static water tank for firefighting, something which need not be over-emphasised in view of the recent fire in the multistoreyed *Hindustan Times* building on Kasturba Gandhi Marg and another fire which had broken out in a multistoreyed building on Barakhamba Road. But if Jagmohan is peeved at the possible use of the space adjoining the basement of the new building and is opposed to the extension of the basement beyond the plinth area of the new building, then his eyes should again turn towards the Vikas Minar of DDA, the *Express* sources point out. The Vikas Minar, according to these sources, stands on only one-third of the plot and the basement is three times the plinth area, it is alleged.

The bone of contention regarding additional construction is an upper basement, which is being built in view of the need to instal a rotary press. The rotary machine, it is pointed out, has to be approached at the base level and at the shoulder level. The newsprint is fed at the base level and the printed newspapers are taken out at the shoulder level, which normally is kept close to the road level so that the vans can pick up the newspapers and move out.

The *Indian Express* authorities claim that they are building a concrete slab on the shoulder level of the rotary because wood is prone to fire hazards and steel will make the place very hot in summer. Moreover, steel being a good electrical conductor, it will be dangerous. The concrete slabs are there in the *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India* buildings as well, it is pointed out by these sources. The proposed building of *The Statesman* too has a similar provision, it is learnt. In view of this, *Express* sources assert that what seems to be an additional bit of construction has to be looked at differently as the authorities themselves agreed to allow the *Express* to set up a press in the new building's basement. The special type of machinery needed to bring out a newspaper should be kept in view and the upper basement, being an extension of the needs for which the use of basement has been allowed in the first place by the sanction letter, should not also be taken into account while calculating the floor-area ratio. The *Express* management planned to seek justice from the Supreme Court and try to get the Delhi Administration restrained regarding any action on the building. The grounds on which the writ has been moved in the court are:

1. Article 14 of the Constitution—equality before the law. The *Express* will assert that while the floor-area ratio and other provisions of buildings, notably the Vikas Minar, are allowed in violation of a strict interpretation of the laws, the *Express* is being singled out.

2. Possibilities of grievous and irreparable damage in case the threat of demolition is carried out.

3. Article 19(1)a of the Constitution—bid to defame and harass the *Express* and curtailment of freedom of speech by putting a newspaper under pressure.

What is interesting in the whole case is that while there are innumerable problems of the Union Territory of Delhi which need the Uparajpal's immediate attention, he has started devoting a lot of time to this one case concerning a single building in the Press area. Even if the charge of irregularities is proved true as held by the Shafra panel, then was it is not enough for one of the lower officials to have dealt with it? Or is Jagmohan still considering himself to be the Vice-Chairman of DDA, as he was during the Emergency, and thinking that all his energies should be diverted towards dealing with 'unauthorised' constructions? It is strange that he should have held two Press conferences and issued several Press statements on this one issue. It has now come to light that as he wanted the file on the case brought before him immediately, one cupboard in the municipality office had to be broken open because the officer dealing with the case was on leave. Jagmohan has said that he is not being vindictive but is only trying to undo a wrong decision of the Janata Government.

A slum on fire

A gruesome eviction-spree



Police atrocities in Baiganwadi

AS lakhs of people in Bombay settled down to enjoy a long weekend on Saturday, March 15, March 17 being Ramnavami, (a public holiday), 5,000 women, children and men were rendered homeless. Their huts were reduced to smouldering cinders after a two-hour battle with the police. At about 11.30 a.m., a posse of policemen who constitute a part of the demolition squad, descended on the slum-dwellers of Baiganwadi in Govandi area. The hapless women and children had never seen so many policemen together. The area has just one police station which looks after the Denaar abattoir. If the residents of Govandi, mostly slum-dwellers, have to lodge a complaint, they are required to go to Kurla

which is miles away. The law and order situation in this area is terrible. At 11.30 in the morning most of the men were away and the women and children had to defend their homes from the robot-like demolition squad of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. They were in illegal occupation of Municipal land and had formed the new Baiganwadi Colony three years ago. Most of them were sweepers, municipal workers, petty shopkeepers and people doing sundry jobs with no steady source of income. The majority of residents are Muslims. A number of illicit liquor dens operate in the area. Most of the people are tenants of the slum-lord Umber Pathan who constructed the huts. He later sold these to the

slum-dwellers and reportedly made Rs six lakhs in the bargain.

In Bombay slum-lords usually sell huts to dwellers and periodically the Municipal authorities come and demolish them. The slum-lord then arrives on the scene, builds new huts and sells them off. It is like a deal between the slum-lords and the Municipal authorities. It is alleged that even some councillors are in this reckless money-making game. According to official sources, the Municipal authorities say that they warned the dwellers in advance about the impending demolition. But the slum-dwellers say they were not given any notice.

After the incident all political big-wigs, including the former Chief Minister Sharad Pawar reached the slum to shed their quota of crocodile tears. But sympathy ended there. Five thousand people are in search of homes and thousands have to start from scratch as all their belongings were destroyed in the fire. According to the dwellers, the police set fire to their huts with burning rods after the women and children put up resistance. The police fired two rounds of tear-gas, and in the blur and commotion it is said, set fire to the huts also.

Mrs Mahatre, the wife of a sweeper saw her one-and-a-half-year-old child beaten with a lathi by the police. Neither old men and women nor children were spared from savage police rites. Demolition of slums is nothing new. There is a special demolition squad in the Bombay Municipal Corporation with a budget of Rs two lakhs every month. And so, onward to the next ruthless demolition.

OLGA TELLIS, Bombay

Delhi student murdered

Billa and Ranga behind bars notwithstanding

MYSTERY shrouds the brutal murder of a 19-year-old college student Gautam Jaysinghania whose decomposed body was found in a shallow grave on March 21 this year.

At the time of writing, the Delhi Police seems completely confused about the motive and identity of the criminal. Behind what is perhaps one of Delhi's most intriguing murders in recent times. The only son of a busboy in Azamuddin West, a South Delhi colony, Gautam was a final-year B.Sc. student at the prestigious St. Stephens College. On March 6 Gautam was dropped at the Mall Road bus stop near his college by a friend around 1 p.m. That was the last time anyone saw him alive.

There was no news of Gautam till the next evening when his worried family received a letter from him. The letter scribbled on two sheets torn from an exercise book, bore the sketch of a map and was dated March 6. The letter was in Gautam's hand, and evidently written in a hurry. It said, "Come immediately, these people are very serious. They robbed me and are armed with guns. They will kill me and kill you. Bring money—the maximum. And please don't tell anybody." The letter asked Mr Jaysinghania to come within an hour of receiving the letter to a place in Govindpuri. There he would find two other letters. One would be under a car bearing the same number as

the Jaysinghania car. The other would be stuck among a clump of electric poles at the spot. The letter, received by Mr Jaysinghania on March 7, was marked "letter number one" and was accompanied by a map giving directions to the spot in Govindpuri.

The Jaysinghania's received the letter late because the address on the letter, which was hand-delivered was wrong. The address on the letter which was significantly not in Gautam's handwriting was G 57, while the Jaysinghania's stay at G 77.

Gautam's father immediately rushed off to the appointed place and after some difficulty located the clump of electric poles. To his surprise there was no car and no letters. After waiting near the poles for about an hour Mr Jaysinghania came back disappointed. He then met the Delhi Police chief P. S. Bhinder and showed him the letter. Earlier he had reported the matter to the local police,

who showed no sense of urgency and advised him to wait for a few days, instead of panicking. However, after seeing the letter from Gautam, the police were more serious and the Commissioner Mr Bhinder promised Mr Jaysinghanla that all efforts would be made to trace his son.

The Jaysinghanias also inserted an advertisement in the newspapers asking for information about their missing son. The police evidently did not go very far. After two weeks when they failed to find any clue, they announced an award of Rs 5,000 for information about Gautam. The Jaysinghanias received a torrent of phone calls from all over the capital and some telegrams from other cities offering information in response to the advertisement. Although most of the details were useless, one phone call was particularly mysterious.

On March 16, exactly ten days after Gautam disappeared, Mr Jaysinghanla got a phone call from an anonymous caller who claimed to know about Gautam's whereabouts. The caller who spoke in a cultured and obviously upper-class accent, said he would be waiting that night in front of a South Delhi cinema hall on a yellow motorcycle. Mr Jaysinghanla rushed to the cinema hall but was again disappointed. There was no yellow motorcycle.

On March 21, around 2.30 p.m., a chowkidar doing his rounds in Govindpuri found a nauseating smell coming from a jungle in the area. He followed the smell and found a human leg sticking out of a hole in the ground. The chowkidar informed the police who then took about three hours to dig out the decomposed body with hands tied behind, clad in Wrangler jeans, a fawn T-shirt and brown shoes. Later, Mr Jaysinghanla identified the body as Gautam's. The body lay just half a kilometre from the spot marked "one" in Gautam's letter.

The post-mortem report which was released the next day by the police said that Gautam had been killed about a fortnight before his body was discovered. His death, the report said, occurred due to asphyxiation. The body was too decomposed to enable officials to ascertain whether it bore any stab wounds although some newspapers quoted police sources as saying that the body bore four stab wounds. The murder has completely baffled the police who are now trying to cover up their apathy in the first place. According to relatives of the Jaysinghanla family, Gautam's parents are very bitter about the fact that the police did not make enough effort to trace Gautam.

The parallels with the murder of the Chopra children which created such a furore two years back are many. Firstly, both came from upper-class families and disappeared in broad daylight from crowded streets. Secondly, in both cases the police initially did not take much interest in finding the criminals. Again, in both cases, the police had some idea of

where the missing persons could be. Mr Chopra is reported to have told the police just a few hours after he found his children missing, that they were lying on the ridge. The police did nothing. In the case of Gautam Jaysinghanla, the police knew from the letter that Gautam or his assailant were somewhere near the spot in Govindpuri. In both cases, the victims were found in areas the police claimed to have already searched but found nothing. In both cases, the bodies were discovered instead by civilians. And in both cases, of course a lot was left unexplained.

The strange facts of the Chopra case are well-known. In the case of Gautam Jaysinghanla, the mystery is as thick. Some of them are very intriguing. The exact date on which Gautam was murdered for instance is still not clear. The police say the body was found a fortnight after the

murder. Gautam's relatives claim that the doctors who did the post-mortem told them he was killed only four days back. There is also the discovery of a wig near Gautam's grave as well as a car both of which the police later denied had anything to do with the murder. There are even reports about an old girlfriend of Gautam who was missing from her house from around the same time Gautam disappeared.

The police are presently eliminating some of the theories, and claim that they are poised for a "major breakthrough" in the case. In the Chopra case the breakthrough came in the shape of the accidental arrest of Billa and Ranga. It is to be seen how lucky the Delhi police will be this time.

AJOY BOSE, New Delhi

Are doctors covering up?



Nazreen Banu and her mother

HUMAN tragedies become more poignant when elders trade upon the misfortunes of children. How else can one explain the attitude of Bahadur Khan and Mahmooda Bee, the parents of little Nazreen Banu who turned blind due to the carelessness of two surgeons at the Sarojini Devi hospital, a Government-owned hospital in Hyderabad. The parents' consent to operate upon the cancer-affected left eye is not forthcoming. The doctors who removed the wrong eye were immediately suspended and the chief minister, Chappa Reddy, said that they would be ultimately dismissed from service. But the doctors are now trying to save their skin by hushing up the whole affair. It is alleged that the parents are being offered substantial sums of money in return for helping hush up the matter.

Meanwhile, the authorities postponed the operation on the malignant left eye because the parents' consent was not forthcoming and promised an inquiry into the tragedy. There are no signs of this inquiry though more than a month has passed since the incident. The entire affair now has become a bit mysterious and there may be a few skeletons in the hospital's

cupboards. However, the parents of the unfortunate child seem to have resigned themselves to fate and have decided to extract the maximum financial benefits in this unfortunate bargain. The parents appear all set to come to a compromise because they know that Nazreen is not likely to regain her sight or for that matter may not survive at all. Their position has been strengthened as the two surgeons are definitely in a very tight spot and the state Government is greatly embarrassed after the furore in the Vidhan Sabha. Perhaps what is more important is the great publicity which Nazreen's case received in the regional and national Press. This medical tragedy was also given wide coverage in the international Press and has drawn worldwide attention. An American lady, Elizabeth Murphy, took pains to send a clipping from a Florida journal which quotes a leading ophthalmologist at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset saying that it is possible for an eye-cancer patient to regain his sight. According to this specialist, Dr Samuel Packer, a radioactive compound called Iodine-125 is used by doctors to focus radiation precisely on the tumour without damaging the surrounding healthy tissues and the treatment has proved 100 per cent successful.

At the time of writing, the official position is that the state Government has agreed to bear the expenses which will be incurred for Nazreen's treatment in America. Nazreen along with her mother are to leave for the Memorial Hospital in New York as soon as the papers and passports are ready. Hopefully.

*A CORRESPONDENT,
Hyderabad*

Save Orissa's forests

Tree-cutting permits run amock

"OPERATION Cleaning" of a vast area in the "Reserved Forests" under Karanjia Forest Division in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa is a racket that could very well embarrass any Government. Now that Orissa is under President's Rule, the prospects of probe into this scandalous denudation of forests allegedly in collusion with local forest officials, seem bright.

Without concern for the acute diesel crisis during the last two months, a large number of trucks was brought from outside to carry away heaps of felled trees from the reserved forests. Forest officials, apparently, had either no concern or knowledge about the silent valley precedent, and worldwide anxiety over the ecological hazards of deforestation. The global threat to tropical rain forests is alarmingly

high, and the minimum rate of destruction is said to be about 14 acres a minute. The World Wildlife Fund and the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) were so concerned that they had launched a major conservation campaign. Recently the Inspector General of Forests indicated that more than five million hectares of forest land in India have been lost over the past two decades. The way in which forests in the Karanjia division were ravaged indicate scant regard for the IGF's note of caution on largescale deforestations.

The devastation was the result of a conspiracy hatched by a ring of profiteers. Racketeering in permits for felling trees in the ticketed lands of tenants is not uncommon. What was in the context of the pre-

sent case was the liberal and large-scale issue of permits for felling trees in the 'ticketed lands' and then the robbing of trees from nearby reserved forests and their removal on the strength of the 'ticketed land permits'. An estimated four lakh cft of timber were believed to have been removed between December, 1979 and the middle of February, 1980. The reserved forests were stripped of valuable species like Sal, Piasal, and Gambhari. According to the present market rate, Gambhari was now selling at Rs. 30 per cft, Sal at Rs. 25 per cft and Piasal at Rs. 40 per cft. The Government could earn a revenue of nearly rupees one crore, if the value of the pirated stocks of timber and size-wood were taken at Rs. 25 per cft on the average. The forest officials were however rewarded for their alleged help in this wanton destruction of forest wealth. For every cft of pirated timber, the pirates had to pay Rs. two to the abettors. Thus, for an estimated four lakh cft of illegally acquired timber, nearly

Getting the Governor's goat

CALCUTTA is at last a crime-free city...and we are not 'kidding'. The Calcutta Police has been totally free to do their own thing, and was probably doing free hand exercises when they discovered that the Governor of West Bengal, the sprightly Mr. T. N. Singh, had one of his goats missing from the goat-shed (located on the west side, facing the Assembly House) on the thoroughly guarded Raj Bhawan premises. So the police swung into action—to get the Governor's goat. And the public's too...

At the crack of dawn on Sunday, March 9, one of the "very important" goats was stolen, slaughtered and swallowed, its hide being sold to an unknown man living near New Market for Rs 25. Raj Bhawan declined to give details, pleading that it was "a minor issue", but the Governor reportedly wanted a police probe. So the then Police Commissioner, Mr S. K. Sinha, himself visited the premises hinting that the Detective Department would be asked to investigate. The State Forensic Science Laboratory's Director, Dr Sasthi Choudhuri, too, personally inspected the compound. Apart from them, the *Anandabazar Patrika* reported that four deputy commissioners, several assistant commissioners, fingerprint experts, a photographer and a police dog were also deployed, and as many as 40 were on the trail. And all for a goat...

According to an anonymous police source, it all started as one big joke by the Press on the police, and that explained the widely con-

flicting details in the local newspapers. Another police official felt that the Press was "starved" of news and had rung in a "silly season" even before the summer vacations when they traditionally commence in Britain. Yet another agreed, but qualified that the senior officials themselves issued Press statements, so who to blame?

On Tuesday, March 11, three arrests were made, followed by another, and all four (Govinda Poddar, Rashid, Asad Ali and Ramesh Das alias 'Kalia', officially described as "homeless thieves") were produced before Mr M. Roy, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Calcutta, and remanded in police custody till March 22, and later released on bail, pending further investigation. The police could trace the bloodstained lungi which led to the "thieves", and the razor used for the slaughter which was found on the person of 'Kalia'.

The Raj Bhawan goat-shed houses 14 goats, including two billy-goats from Israel bought for Rs 8,000 and five Indian nanny-goats kept for cross-breeding purposes, and it was one of these Indian goats which was stolen. But while investigating this case, the police stumbled upon a smuggling den where foreign liquor and imported gadgets were traded though no goods could actually be found. The Police Commissioner himself gave this information and that "various criminal acts" were being carried on.

According to the Deputy Commissioner (Central); Mr H. A. Safwi, the news reports were

exaggerated. The caretaker, Ram Phal, on verification, was found to be innocent; and apart from the DC himself, only the OC, Hare Street was investigating the case. Asked if it was wrong to say that 40 police personnel were on the trail, the affable Mr Safwi roared in laughter and said, "I would say only one sub-inspector!"

A senior police official, not involved with this investigation, said that it was perhaps the words "smuggling den" that created a bit of a sensation. "It would be more appropriate to call it regularised stealing from the premises." But was it true at least that there was regularised stealing? Grinning, he commented: "Let's put it this way: where there's a finger, and where there's a pie, the finger is bound to be in the pie."

While it has been verified from an authoritative source that the Police Commissioner had curiously, taken a very keen interest in the goat-disappearance case, the Press Adviser, Government of West Bengal, issued letters to all the newspapers claiming: "On inquiry it is found that the Commissioner of Police has been misquoted...In fact, the local police have no information whatsoever about the alleged den of smugglers and illicit liquor manufacturers in the Raj Bhawan estate."

Who was it who said, 'Never believe a rumour—till it is denied by the Government'?

ANIL GROVER, Calcutta

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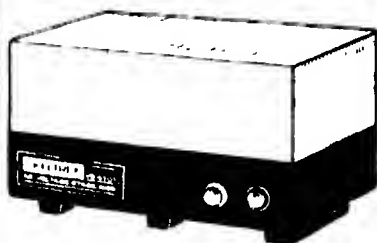


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FDS-623C

Rs. 80,000 had to be paid to one party in the racket as a share of the booty.

This indiscriminate felling of trees in the reserved forest area certainly merited a high-level probe. Permits for felling trees in ticketed lands are supposedly issued to meet tenant needs like house-building, and similar other contingencies. Wood acquired from ticketed lands is not normally used in general timber trade. The probe could also attempt to find out the uses huge quantities of timber and firewood cut from the reserved forest areas were put to. How, firstly, did these stocks find their way out of the State, and with whose connivance?

The peak period for piracy in the forest was stated to be the first fortnight of February, 1980. The goods traffic in the MDR (Major District Road) No. 10 was so heavy during that time, that the road, recently repaired, was damaged beyond recognition. The cause of the unprecedented increase in the movement of public carriers on the MDR

was said to be the hasty removal of trees hacked from the reserved forest areas.

Describing the intensity of goods traffic on the road during the peak period of piracy, a knowledgeable source said nearly two trucks sped down the road every five minutes on a particular day. Trucks were pressed into the job of transporting the pirated trees with fabulous hiring charges. Fancy prices were also paid for fetching diesel oil so that the trees could be removed with haste, speed and drive without interruption.

There was also a paucity of space in the local Saw Mills and the Karanjia NAC area for keeping stocks of the exploited timber until their disposal. Although huge stocks had already found their way outside the State, an appreciable quantity was still awaiting disposal. The clique seems to have been anxious to see the balance stocks quickly disposed.

AMARENDRA BOSE, Mayurbhanj

Cruelty on tribals

THIRTY three years after Independence, freedom, justice and democracy mean nothing to hundreds of suffering adivasis in Madhya Pradesh's tribal areas. Besides poverty and exploitation by landlords, they have to contend with an increasingly oppressive police force: the manner in which helpless tribals are dragged into police stations and brutally tortured — well before trial — suggests hardly any regard for human life. The recent death in police custody of a tribal, Khumni, at the Ranapur Police station in the first week of February is a sad pointer.

Khumni's crime was stated to be that he was drunk, although drinking is legally permissible for bhils and adivasis under the State's law. Khumni was brought to the police station, and within two hours, declared dead. A similar fate befell Hari Singh of village Marhwari in Bilaspur district, whose wife was supposed to have committed suicide. The police took it to be a murder, and arrested Hari Singh on the charge. On the same day, Singh mysteriously died in police custody, even before he could face trial. A head constable of the police station was suspended, and the case was under investigation which hasn't produced anything yet. Atrocities are also frequent in adivasi-dominated areas of Bastar. Doraswami, a sweeper, was hauled up in the police station for 'not doing his duties' and beaten mercilessly. Doraswami was in such pain after the hiding, he almost collapsed, and had to be rushed to hospital where he

spent two months recovering from the shock. In many cases, the police are careful not to leave any marks of torture in order to prove the victim was never brought to the police station. Since there is no one to speak for them, the police get away with it. Figures on such incidents in the State indicate there is at least one death every month.

The tribals are terrified of the police, so much so that there are even cases of people having committed suicide to avoid being taken to police stations for "questioning". Two years ago, a person in Balaghat, a district town, took his own life before facing the police. Manik, a youth in Bhilai committed suicide in lock-up last year.

A senior police official told this reporter that deaths in police custody were generally "accidental and not deliberate". There was never any intention to kill anybody, he affirmed. Pointing out one instance of what he called a row over a death by accident, he said the relative of a former MP had died in police custody in 1978 in Sujalpur, in the Sajaipur district. The arrested man had sustained a head injury from a brawl that was not visible, and brought to the police station in a serious condition. For lack of medical care, he died the following morning. An agitation was started against the police, and a number of people alleged to have seen the man being beaten by the police, he said. That could be an accident. What about many others?

GIRIJASHANKAR, Bhopal

Through a crystal, darkly

THEY say this story about an astrologer who made millions conning the gullible. From far and wide they came to see him, and paid him fabulously. Though his predictions were often wrong, he was careful never to make promises. Eventually the police got wind of the racket, and the Commissioner himself went to see him personally. Before he had his palm read he asked the astrologer if he would answer a question: "Yes," said the conman. "Will your bluff ever be exposed?" he asked. "Ob no," laughed the astrologer, "the police in this city are far too stupid." "Wrong on both counts," said the policeman, as he clapped the man in irons.

Though the astrologer had a hard time convincing his captor, perhaps with no success, astrology may not quite be the evil racket it is made out to be. But what is it all about? Is it a science? Why do so many people depend on its predictions? Can astrologers really tell the future?

Astrology actually was born in the Vedic times, when sages recorded the movement of the planets and their influences on the human body and mind. Later, these observations helped deduce certain formulae which were passed down from generation to generation. Indian sages have classified astrology as having three subdivisions: mathematics, applied astrology and astrological *samhita* or treatises. In mathematical astrology, the positions and movements of the planets are ascertained, as also their speed; while in applied astrology it is human fate that is ascertained according to the stars and planets; finally *samhita* deals with the those precise aspects of the stars and planets which produce, alternately, favourable or unfavourable influences on human life.

Since astrology determines the relation between a man's life and the influences on it of certain stars, it is, to all practical intents and purposes, based on scientific premises. It is an old debate whether in fact stars do have any influence on human life, but then again, like so many other eternal debates in life, this has not yet found an answer.

In the Sixties an American satellite informed scientists on the earth that there had been a tremendous explosion in the sun, which increased its magnetic powers. As a result the magnetic sphere of the earth was also disturbed. During this time in the Soviet Union doctors noted that there had been an increase in the number of patients in hospitals. Many were

By AMRITALAL DEY

suffering from blood-pressure, heart diseases and nervousness. In the course of the investigations that followed it was found that old manuscripts had dwelt on the subject. They mentioned that whenever such a disturbance in the sun's atmosphere occurred, the incidence of diseases rose. Recently, British scientists mentioned in the scientific journal, *Nature*, that the breeding of fishes was directly connected to changes in the sun's outermost layer, the corona. The sun's corona increases in width every 11 years, causing changes in fish-breeding habits. This in turn causes temperature changes in the waters of the seas and oceans. Similarly changes in the position of the sun cause changes in the secretion of enzymes in the human body, which naturally affect a human being's sleep, sex urges and other such functions.

Scientists have also discovered that insects are affected by the waxing and waning of the moon: during a full moon the number of insects increases. Human reproductivity is similarly affected by the moon. During lunar phases, women undergo certain bodily changes, especially during their periods. A scientist at the Wichita State University, has found that lunar phases also cause changes in human blood circulation and create psychological tension. The moon not only causes tidal bores in the rivers and seas but also changes in the land surface. Since the human body contains an enormous quantity of water—70 per cent—changes in the position of the moon also cause changes in the human body and mind. The Journal of Inter-disciplinary Research conducted a survey on 3,392 couples and found that women born in July if married to men born in March never enjoyed conjugal bliss and eventually separated. Divorces and marital unhappiness were also noticed among men born in February married to women born in May, men born in July and October married to women born in February and June, and men born at the end of November married to women born at any time of the year. This proves that the sun, moon and planets affect human life. Astrologers have observed and proved that every time some planets arrive at a certain spot while moving along their orbital paths, the earth experiences upheavals in the form of accidents and deaths.

The sun's light is very special in colour, varies in intensity, and is

composed of seven different colours—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. The sun influences all planets of the solar system and controls their movement. Its atmosphere is made up of hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sodium, helium and iron, among other things. Since all these elements are present in the earth too, there is a link between the sun and the earth.

Astrology and the ancient Indian science of Ayurveda complement each other. Ayurveda has proved that stones and the ash of burnt stones have curative properties. According to the science, the human body is made up of three main elements: air, phlegm and choler. Any change in the proportion of these elements will have corresponding effects on human health. Ayurveda states that diamond ash cures leprosy, diabetes, anaemia, TB, etc. The ash of the ruby, if consumed, could prolong longevity, cure pains, eye trouble and is also an antidote for poison. According to the eminent scientist, Dr. Meghnad Saha, even wearing a stone attracts the rays of the sun, which have curative powers.

The colour of the stone is very important; the effect of the stone on the human body and mind varies with its colour. Stones are formed as a result of years of heat, and pressure exerted on them within the earth's crust. The colour and utility of the stone thus varies with the amount of heat and pressure exerted on it. Since the choice of the stone depends on the heat and pressure it has been subject to, different stones are necessary in different circumstances.

On the subject of the future, a question arises: Why do the fortunes of people born at the same time in different parts of the earth differ? The answer lies in after-life, a concept implicit in astrology. Sixty-five per cent of a man's actions in his past life are punished or rewarded, as the case may be, in the present life. This accounts for individual differences in fortunes.

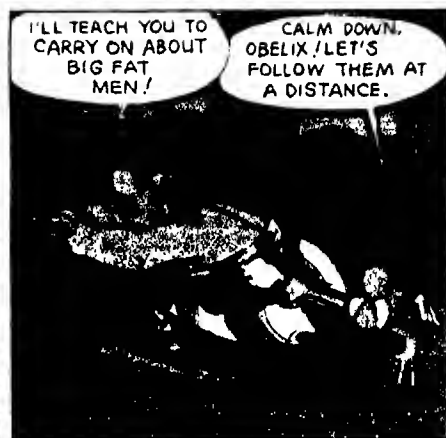
How then can it be ascertained from personal horoscopes as to who would become a Buddha or a rascal? The fact is, astrology is not a pure science but an applied science. Its application is similar in some respects to that of medical science; astrologers must take into account individual peculiarities in the same way as doctors give different prescriptions to different persons suffering from the same disease. Knowledge and experience is essential for judging individual fortunes, and giving accurate predictions of human life. ■



Asterix and the BANQUET

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO





INVESTIGATION

THE armed movement for land in Bihar following Independence was countered by Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement. Today, his ideas have been thrown to the winds. The Bhoodan Yagna Samiti, a statutory body, was formed in the states to look after the land gifted by the people. The expenses incurred by the body are borne by the Government. There has thus been a conflict between the people and the Government. When the Bhoodan workers, especially the leaders, started receiving salaries from the Government, they were less interested in their work and corruption became rampant. Since then statistics have been bandied about. No one has bothered to find out the internal workings of the organisation and the corruption in the organisation has had an impact on even JP's "Total Revolution".

Bihar is believed to be the bastion of the Bhoodan movement. Out of 42 lakh acres of land received more than half is in Bihar. The Bihar Bhoodan Yagna Samiti was formed in 1954. Acharya Vinoba Bhave nominated the committee members from 1954 to 1968. In 1971 he informed the Government that the Sarva Sewa Society would nominate the members since he was "renouncing the world". This was in accordance with the law. The Government had a right to nominate the Yagna committee members if Vinoba Bhave failed to nominate them for four years. Further, the State Government also gave around Rs 3 to 7 lakhs per year to the organisation and naturally had an interest in it. The Bihar Government has given around Rs 54 lakhs altogether for organisational purposes. The figure is around Rs one crore if the amounts given for different purposes are totalled. In 1974, at the height of the students' movement in Bihar the term of the committee expired. At that time, the Congress Government on the advice of Vinobaji inducted those opposing the students' movement into a newly formed committee.

The Sarvodaya and Bhoodan movements have become shelters for leaders who have retired from active politics. Consequently, Pandit Rajendra Misra, the elder brother of Dr Jagannath Misra, was made the president of the committee. The others in the committee were Sarvanarayan Das, Mahendra Narain Singh (Saharsa), Kedar Prasad Mandal (Saharsa), Nageshwar Sen (Bhagalpur) and Shyam Prakash Singh (Gaya). The names of Jayaprakash Narayan and Baidyanath Prasad Choudhury, who were active supporters of the Bhoodan Movement, were removed at the insistence of the Government. Vinoba Bhave also did not object.

The work of land distribution started immediately after the com-



Bhoodan means loot

ARUN RANJAN exposes the goings-on in Bihar in the name of the movement

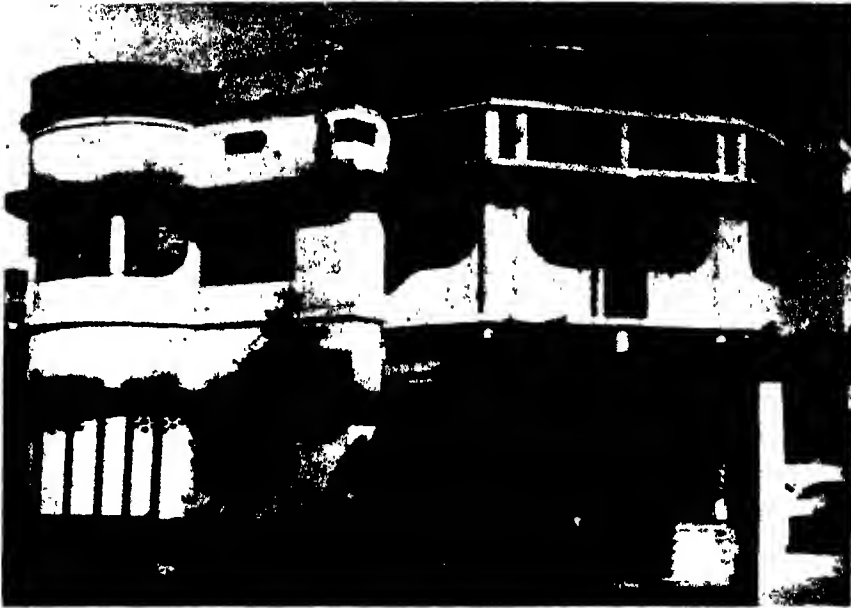
mittee was formed and the programme was coupled with Indira Gandhi's 20-point programme. To give the programme wider scope, distribution of Government land to the landless was also added to the Bhoodan movement. And during the Emergency, Bhoodan naturally became an integral part of the 20-point programme. Due to the paucity of funds, the programme had to be stopped sometimes. During such a stoppage a few of the workers complained to Vinobaji. He called the then Congress Chief Minister and a state Minister to Paunar. He told them that the Government should take full responsibility of the Bhoodan movement. The state Congress Ministers assured Vinobaji that the Government would take full charge of the movement within a year. Vinoba Bhave gave a deadline to the state Government: October 2, 1977.

Meanwhile, a conflict started on February 17, 1977 between the president and the members regarding the posts of office-bearers. The organisation's main office in Kadamkuan, Patna, was locked up. Funds belonging to the organisation were declared unuseable. This situation continued till June 1977. In July '77 the two groups came to a conditional agreement. Instead of one secretary three came in. The president was successful in inducting his protégé, Nageshwar Sen, as secretary. The other two were Shyam Prakash Singh and Kedar Prasad Mandal. It is amazing how the committee which was in opposition to the students' movement, was reconstituted during the Janata rule. The only additions to the committee were Narasingh Narayan Singh, the president and Devanand Misra, a member from the

Sarvodaya Mandal. There had been a lot of lobbying for the post of president between Tripurari Sharan of the Sarvodaya Mandal and Dharamvir Singh the head of the Patna Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

Dharamvir Singh had made four written allegations about Tripurari Sharan. One of the allegations was that Mr Sharan had kept the then Bihar Chief Minister, Karpooori Thakur, awake for a whole night trying to convince him to give him the post of president in the Bhoodan organisation. At present three people have their eyes on the organisation—Tripurari Sharan, Dharamvir Sinha and Shyam Prakash Singh.

Erstwhile zamindars gifted around 17 lakh acres of land to the Bihar Bhoodan movement out of a total 29.96 lakh acres. Ordinary people who owned little land gave only around four lakh acres. Most of the land of the zamindars was non-agricultural. According to the Government this land was recognised as Bhoodan land. The Government had earlier declared that zamindars who did not take any compensation for the lands could consider the total area as given to Bhoodan. The cunning zamindars did exactly that. In this way 23 lakh acres of land were transformed into Bhoodan land. Later, due to the negligence of the organisation some wily zamindars managed Government compensation. They also got back their land. Only about 18.66 lakh acres of land has been surveyed by the Bhoodan workers. The Government helps out in this type of surveying. More than half of the total land is fit for cultivation. Out of this only 2.29 lakh acres are uncultivated. In Bihar till



The Bhoodan Yagna Samiti Bhavan

September 1969 only 5.32 lakh acres of land could be distributed. Altogether 7.83 lakh acres are fit for distribution. Initially the organisation had declared that all the land was cultivable. This lapse on the organisation's part was due to negligence in not carrying out the survey. There are also serious lapses regarding distribution. The committee, it seems, has no fixed norms with which to view whether a piece of land is cultivable or not. Farmers have been given papers regarding ownership without their having seen the land. Such instances can be found in Nirmali, Marauna, Kishanpur, Supaul in Saharsa district, Kesria in Champaran district and Bhawra in Cnnapra district.

Two new practices regarding the distribution system were observed which are detrimental to the whole idea of the movement. Many landholders, usually the large ones, have got back their land discreetly. Often those who gifted the land realised their folly later. Meanwhile, the cost of the land had risen considerably. The procedure for getting the land back is this: After the gifting of the land a "no objection" notice is issued by the LRDC. After some time

The landless betrayed



the land is handed over to the organisers of the Bhoodan movement. At the instance of the Bhoodan movement's officers and the related Government officials the gifted land is returned. The only thing required is the return of the deed with the owner in which the gift of land is recorded. Thus there are no records. There are hundreds of cases like this.

The method of looting of land is even stranger. The land is supposed to be given to the poor and the landless. Interested parties within the movement usually make the gifted land available to friends and relatives. Such land is also given to Sarvodaya workers in the farms and ashrams. These lapses have occurred in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Shahabad, Saharsa and Purnea. In Adhaura Shahabad, a Sarvodaya leader, Harikrishan Thakur, is farming land belonging to the landless. He got this land through strongarm methods. Thus many Sarvodaya and Bhoodan workers have today become landlords. The doings of a Saharsa landlord, Mahendra Narain Singh are quite scandalous. He exacts his "share" from the farmers who cultivate the gifted land. Whoever refuses to part with his share is removed. It is said that he has acquired nearly 13,000 acres of land from those who benefited from Bhoodan. Mahendra Singh is an erstwhile office-bearer of the Bhoodan Yagna Samiti. Whenever honest workers have complained about these lapses to Vinoba Bhave, not only has he done nothing but he has excused himself on his renunciation plea.

It is due to the negligence of the salaried Bhoodan workers that out of 21 lakh acres of land only 6 lakh acres have been declared barren. Since records are not up to date they can be easily transferred. Land was earmarked in the movement for many projects. The committee does not possess records on the location or the nature of the project. Some people have made money by false

documentation about which the committee is silent. Thirty Sarvodaya workers received Rs 7.5 crores from the Government for a pilot project for 350 farming families. A lesser number of farmers were resettled and their condition too did not improve. All the funds have by now been utilised.

Thus the committee squandered away all the land that Vinoba Bhave had got together for the poor and the landless. The committee members were busy with their little games and corruption was rampant in the set-up. The office-bearers 'earned' thousands of rupees as travelling allowances. Three committees were formed to collect a fabulous amount for the movement. Until this day, this money has gone unaccounted. The 250 workers who assisted the committee were treated like bonded labour by the office-bearers. There have also been a number of sex scandals. Recently, the pro-Narsingh Narain Singh group called an emergency meeting and demanded the suspension of Kedar Chowdhury who runs the Bhoodan office in Ranchi. The president N. N. Singh, wrote a letter suspending Chowdhury but the secretary, Shyam Prakash Singh, who was also a Minister at that time, filed a petition in the munsif court and got a stay order. Thus the president and the secretary are engaged in pointless litigation.

Two years ago, there was a strong move to form 'Sarva seva farms' out of the land that had been donated. But, Mr Bandopadhyay, an officer of the Bihar Government's Revenue department, who examined the proposal, exposed the organisation's malfunctioning and rejected the idea. Then, Bhoodan's titular chief, S. Jagannath, wrote a secret letter (number I49/F-78 dated 11.9.78) to Siddharaj Dhadda: "I hope that you have received my previous letter about the Sarva Seva Farm scheme. I have learnt that the Bihar Bhoodan Yagna Samiti is in very bad shape and its president has resigned after complaining to the Government regarding the behaviour of other office-bearers. It is alleged that the Committee had embezzled a lot of official funds too. The Bihar Government is on these grounds trying to wind up our Committee. Mr Bandopadhyay was present at the meeting when the Sarva Seva Farm scheme was discussed. He said that the Government had other plans for utilising the land which had been donated for Sarvodaya. If this is true, then the Bhoodan movement will be adversely affected". Tripurari Sharan, even wrote a letter to Karpoori Thakur requesting the suspension of Mr Bandopadhyay.

The workers in the movement are demanding that the State should take over the organisation. They allege that the committee has even sold land at astronomical prices. The committee has no figures or statistics to prove its land-distribution operations. The situation is so bad that the landless no longer want anything from Bhoodan or the Sarvodaya committee. ■

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If you are arrested

IT was Rajaji who said that most Congressmen could be rounded up by any magistrate on charges of vagrancy as gentlemen without ostensible means of livelihood. The gibe was not undeserved; only, it was little realised that the police not seldom arrest persons as vagrants simply because they have no "ostensible means of livelihood." In a country like ours, millions would answer this description. Millions, of course, are not arrested but it is only right that the powers which the police enjoy of arresting persons arbitrarily under the ordinary law itself, should receive a second look. Preventive detention is indefensible, whether under a law made specially for that purpose or under ordinary law. The latter aspect has been neglected. It is true that in cases of arrest under the ordinary law there is the constitutional safeguard of production before a magistrate within 24 hours of the arrest. Article 22 (1) and (2) of the Constitution confers on all persons in India, citizen or alien, certain fundamental rights on arrest:

"(1) No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such arrest nor shall he be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice."

"(2) Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court of the magistrate and no such person shall be detained in custody beyond the said period without the authority of a magistrate"

These rights, however, are not available to an enemy alien or "to any person who is arrested or detained under any law providing for preventive detention". Forget the cases of well-off persons in towns and cities. It is legitimate to ask precisely what do these rights of consulting a lawyer or production before a magistrate mean to those who are simply picked up from the streets or arrested in the villages. Where arrests are on a large scale the magistrates are prone to pass a uniform order—remand into custody.

Even in a country like Britain one can be arrested without a warrant if the policeman believes

Civil Liberties



By A. G. NOORANI



you are a "suspected person" loitering in a street or other public place with intent to commit an arrestable offence (Vagrancy Act, 1824). Known as the "sus charge", this gives the police wide powers to arrest people in the streets even though there is no evidence that the person arrested has attempted to commit an offence. Mr Peter Taylor, QC, chairman of the Bar, pointed out recently, on February 28 that "sus" is a fallback type of offence if the police cannot muster enough evidence of a substantive offence.

Also, the use of the concept of suspicion as part of the offence is contrary to the principle of proof beyond reasonable doubt. Suspicion, as distinct from proof, is also the basis on which the law of preventive detention rests. Comparable provisions are found in the Police Acts in various states in India in varying degrees of severity. The Bombay Police Act, 1951 is a relatively liberal statute as police laws go. Section 120 of the Act provides: "Whoever without satisfactory excuse wilfully enters or remains in or upon any dwelling house or premises or any land or ground attached thereto, or on any ground, building, monument or structure belonging to Government or appropriated to public purposes, or on any boat or vessel, shall, on conviction, whether he causes any actual damage or not, be punished with fine which may extend to twenty rupees".

The point is that he can be immediately picked up by the police under this section.

The Criminal Procedure Code itself confers on the police powers wide enough to arrest persons arbitrarily. How are morchas or demonstrations and the like foiled by arrests of a large number of persons in advance? By invoking Section 151 of the Code: 'A police officer knowing of a design to commit any cognizable offence may arrest, without orders from a magistrate and without a warrant, the person so designing, if it appears to such officer that the Commission of the offence cannot be otherwise prevented'. It was under this provision that participants in the land-grab movement were arrested. What are the safeguards against its abuse? Production before a magistrate; criminal prosecution for false imprisonment provided that the state Government sanctions the prosecution; and, lastly, a civil suit for damages which worries no police officer. Some safeguards, these!

SHE has always been around. Lurking in the crowds. Hiding behind street corners. Returning at dusk, when the first whispers of the dark try to lure you way from the bewildering beauty of rimson swirling in the western sky. She has always been around. On

the constant prow, waiting to catch me unawares. And then, one day, I met her. I was barely six years old and had woken up, terrified, to the sound of the wind, moaning and low, thrashing in ecstasy against the branches of the banyan tree outside the window, as I listened to the brisk patter of the rain running

against the glass panes. I rose from the bed to seek shelter but could find no one in the house, and as I stared out through the window grills in maddening fright, I saw her waiting for me. There was no mistaking it. There she was, looking me straight between the eyes through the grey and tattered clouds and, ever since,

LONELINESS

Poet PRITISH NANDY tries to capture its mystery



loneliness and I have known each other. We have shared this world and travelled many weather-beaten roads together.

I remember freak moments of my childhood when nothing that I saw and knew and experienced I could share with anyone, least of all, my family. Through a solitary ventilator a soft shaft of sunlight would fall on the floor of my room, honeycoloured and laden with magic. And in that tiny little area circumscribed and lit up by the sun, I saw rain forests teeming with tigers and elephants, exotic flowers and violet-eyed birds winging into a crimson sky. I saw the surging aquamarine of the seas and strange hydra-headed creatures that lived in its bowels and had tails like a mantle of mist. I saw uncharted islands, verdant and beckoning, twilights that spread their wings to hide the fearful monsoon skies. All this, I still believe, I saw. But

when I told others about it, they either scornfully laughed at me or treated me gently, with alarm writ large in their eyes. When I wrote about this in school one day, my English master, a rather silly, middle-aged Anglo-Indian called Belgarde, thrashed me for telling lies.

And all the while in my heart there was this ache because no one would believe me.

Since then, every time it stormed and the howling winds rattled the doors, I wanted to know, like every lonely child, why the world was so angry. I saw sunsets light up the sky in beautiful colours and wondered who was the artist. But there was no one who would stop and listen to me and give me the answers. That is when I realised how lonely, how utterly helpless I was. So, like many other children I am sure, I tried to evolve my own answer to the problem. Thus, I wove my own world of fantasy. I spent hours in a world that only I knew. And this gave me not just pleasure but also a shelter from the assault of loneliness. The hours became kind. I did not have to wait endlessly for time to pass as I sat on the window sill and drifted towards my own, private Innisfree.

THEN came adolescence and a new sense of loss. My body grew awkward and burgeoned with a strange pain, more cruel and unfathomable than anything I had ever known before. Nights on end I lay awake disturbed, not knowing why this was happening to me. Everything seemed to change. Every experience left me bewildered, and often wounded. So one day I pulled out my old raft and carefully repaired and painted it. I worked relentlessly, without a pause, without any rest. I even fitted up new sails and threw away the old and tattered ones and, once it was ready and the tide was right, I heaved and lugged and set it afloat—and I am still not too sure if I have really returned home since then.

I had set out on a voyage to discover myself and, in the bargain, also discover the world all over again. Strange things were happening to me. Unfamiliar vibes were blowing in the wind all around me. I was slowly emerging from a cocoon and learning to take wings. The experience was exhilarating. Everytime I touched myself, strange things happened. A strange world of sensations opened before me. At eighteen I fought with vengeance, tooth and nail, and married on impulse to escape forever the tentacles of loneliness. Very soon I discovered, as many people do, sometime or the other, that neither love nor marriage can break this primal interface. I was mercilessly ensnared by a deeper love.

My marriage went the way most marriages go these days. So I cut the knot despite the pain. I have never looked back since then. From

a stranger and an enemy, loneliness came closer. We shook hands and became friends. The language of poetry turned to song.

I have, yes, loved much and suffered much. But in this loving and exquisite suffering I have come upon a strange peace. Of this peace, and of my search for it has evolved the syntax of my creativity. The heart has its reasons, true. But no compulsion can be stronger than that of love, of that loneliness with whom we share our most intimate moments. By the time most of us realise this, the green valley of youth turns a rich gold in the mellow autumn sun. And thus have I walked through many loves, marriages, many solitudes. Oftentimes a cold and bitter wind has blown and I have thought of staying on. But while a journeyman can sometimes pause, he seldom builds a home.

Everywhere I have looked around me I have seen loneliness ravage the green of memory. I have seen loneliness on the faces of young men hanging from the windows of crowded buses stumbling along the Esplanade. I have seen it on the face of the tired beggar, old and waiting for death just outside the Asutosh Museum. I have watched old people sunning themselves on wan mornings, on broken benches in the park, "like bookends". Old friends, "memory brushes the same years, silently sharing the same fears" . . . waiting for the sunset, "the sounds of the city, sifting through trees, settling like dust on the shoulders of the old friends". I have even seen loneliness in the eyes of young, successful executives and whizz kids who have found the good life; in the eyes of young girls in processions, their fists held high amidst the rich and the poor, the strong and the tired, the restless and the world-weary. I have seen a madman fighting loneliness even as he had succumbed to almost everything else, from asthma to gangrene, and awaiting the inevitability of death. I have seen much suffering, much brutality all around me; but never have I seen anything more frightening than this all-encompassing, all-pervasive loneliness that has eaten into the sinews of our life.

Whores I have known, hippies I have shared an occasional smoke with, old men and women whose tired memories I have listened to on dark evenings of load shedding, sisters of the poor whom I have watched offering help and succour to the dying and the destitute, little children who I have seen sitting all by themselves even as their friends are all sharing a boisterous game of streetside soccer; the rich, the elegant, the successful; the infirm, the meek and the near-dying; the one who succumbs to life and the one who fights it; the intense, the less and the creative; the clown, the tramp and the hobo; wherever I have looked, I have seen loneliness in their eyes. Perhaps I have "a sense of heat", like Arthur Miller's



Rachin Rai

hero of *The Crucible*, which "has drawn me to my window, and everyone I have seen looking up was burning in their loneliness". I have watched some of my friends, sensitive young people making bombs and grenades and trying to believe that they can change the world. I have known, and sometimes loved, the restless young woman who refuses to give in to the tiresome glamour of success and keeps her battle on, against odds she is often not even aware of. I have seen loneliness in the faces of housewives catching the matinee show, bargemen, pluckers, rickshawpullers, cabaret singers, hawkers, pimps, pickpockets, priests, politicians and poets. The estranged wife, the film star working three shifts, the godman with a following of drop-out millionaires, the fat marwari sitting on his gaddi and plan-

ning his next quick-buck deal. Each and every one of them have succumbed, at some time or the other, to the bitch-goddess of loneliness. And most of them are perhaps her perpetual victim.

THE two most predictable ways out are love and religion. The exotic mythology of love is based on the crucial factor of loneliness. There is no image more persistent or more compelling than that of an elusive love that one seeks through an entire lifetime, failing at every stage and yet never giving up the search. Lady Jane or Ruby Tuesday or even Bob Dylan's Sad-eyed Lady of the Lowlands remain symbols of this eternal quest. For a love that is larger than life, and stronger

than the haunting loneliness of our times.

I have remained eternally tormented by love and have always known even before I walked into any meaningful relationship with a woman that all this is transient and will end one day. But this knowledge that I have come to accept like the mole on my left index finger and carried all the while in my gypsy satchel, has never stopped me from stepping into a relationship and trying to work it out. But love, alas, is seasonal and this game of giving and taking is based on the needs of summer, autumn, winter, spring. For every time I have built what I felt were strong walls and said to myself that at last I am invulnerable and secure, the storm has come and taken me unawares and brought the bricks and mortar crashing down. And I have stood, rain-drenched, in the wilderness, exhilarated and damnably alone. The experience has never been fulfilling but it has always been brutally honest. And I have packed my bags and walked away into the night, once again alone.

Like Robinson Crusoe I am perpetually cast ashore. I have no weapons to fight with, no tools to build with. I have only my raft, a few odds and ends, and someone who can occasionally hold my hand. Surrounded by such paraphernalia, I pick up the broken threads and tie them diligently together to try and face life once more. Only the past endures and love becomes more than a mirage for the waylost. Yes, only the past is irrevocable, and the loneliness that lassoes me to its breast.

How do you absolve yourself? How do you transcend the fear of loneliness? Or, better still, how do you come to terms with it? I have seen the misery of a lonely beggar dying in the backstreets of Howrah with not a stitch of clothing on his body over his open, pus-ridden wounds. I have also witnessed, often at close quarters, the loneliness of friends who have all the comforts of the world for the asking. How does one resolve this dichotomy? Not, I think, by pointing a finger at the haves or even the have-nots, but by accepting the cruel surge of the sea when it lashes at our backs in rage and by harnessing its inherent energy and converting it into something meaningful and relevant to our lives. As Dag Hammarskjöld wrote somewhere in his posthumously published *Diaries*, "pray that loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for".

I once had a friend who was a Bharatanatyam dancer, among other things. A woman with long rain-torrent hair and deep, cozening eyes. She was very beautiful and very talented; but she was also very insecure and lonely, and given to fits of deep depression. But she fought and tamed her albatross with single-minded dedication to her art. She would torment herself and work till

Raghu Ra-



every bone and sinew in her fragile body could take no more. Often she would collapse on stage, but would come back again within a few minutes with a zeal that few could match. Her energy and her *joie de vivre* were contagious, as was her lust for life. And she lived to the hilt when she was dancing. Not in love or in hate, in war or in peace did she find solace. Only when her fingers opened up like tendrils of a supple plant and her feet worked themselves in intricate patterns to a rhythmic crescendo, did she celebrate life and reconcile with the meaning of sorrow. My gypsy love may have caused her much suffering but she realised, I am almost sure, that life blooms in her entire glory only when one has suffered and love becomes infinitely tender when reflected upon once all is over and done with.



In the faces of countless people in the streets of our cities, and elsewhere in the world, I have seen the terror of loneliness that comes with age. In India at least the old are loved and often even venerated, though the joint family system is slowly crumbling down and the older members of the family sometimes find themselves left alone. But the old people's home is still an exception to the rule. Most of the senior citizens continue to enjoy the traditional respect given to old age. But they know that old-fashioned values are crumbling: we all recognise that there will soon come a time when, as in the West, such family links will snap. When older members of the family will be left alone to face loneliness, old age, and eventual death.

In the West, it is far worse: this terror of growing old and facing loneliness on one's own. Women who have crossed thirty and men who are over forty in Western boulevards are like autumn leaves blowing hither and thither in the breeze, lost and bewildered. Even though they are perhaps more secure than the old will ever be in our country, with old-age pensions, social benefit schemes, medicare and reasonably comfortable homes to live in for those who have no one to look after them, the fear of old age and loneliness has already begun to haunt them. They look hunted, eternally weary, and as lonely as hell.

As for the old, only memories are left. To quote a famous Simon & Garfunkel number, "old friends, winter companions, the old men lost in their overcoats, waiting for the sunset". "Time it was, and what a time it was, it was...a time of innocence, a time of confidences. Long ago...it must be...I have a photograph. Preserve your memories; they're all that's left of you." Each person is a silent and deserted island. They cannot communicate, hard as they might try, for no one is willing to reach out, no one has the time. This is the ultimate tragedy of the long distance runner. Everyone else falls out at

some stage or the other—only loneliness remains.

When I was a young and callow youth, hardly sixteen summers old, a widow in her early forties lived across the street. She was a friend of my parents and every evening I was packed off to her house to study the complexities of geometry and algebra and other such boring things. Till everything changed one day. Right in the middle of studying the subtleties of Pythagoras' theorem I suddenly felt a hand sliding swiftly up my thighs like a crafty cobra and before I could run for my life, the widow had caught me in her arms. She smelt of mustard and haldi powder, and I was an absolute greenhorn but always eager to learn. The things she taught me I have not forgotten till today. I must have come quite prematurely but she did not seem to mind, and when I took courage and looked into her face, I could honestly see no emotion. Only her eyes, lost and soulful, harboured a loneliness that no amount of physical love could dissipate. I picked up my books and never went back to her house again. But I had learnt another lesson in loneliness.

Sex, obviously, is no answer. Certainly it cannot combat the loneliness of aging.



WHAT about religion? That, after all, is together with sex the two most crucial influences on our lives these days. And like kinky sex, kinky religion has come to stay. Tantra. Moonism. Ananda Marg. Seventh Day Adventists. Jehovah's Witnesses. Balyogeshwar: the religious landscape is today littered with obscure cults, common masquerading as gurus and godmen, strange sects and stranger faiths. The range is quite impressive. From the moronic Sai Baba who buggers his paleface disciples to the randy Rajneesh who sells the predictable package of sex and woolly mysticism. From the belligerent Billy Graham, one time private evangelist to Tricky Dick and his family and later their most ardent defender, who threatens you with dire consequences if you do not "save" your soul to the insane mass suicide inspired by Jim Jones and his frenzied mafia on a strange religious trip. From the neurotic hotline that the hideous Idi Amin has with his god to that irrepressible clown, Muammar Gaddafi who is financing the Islamic bomb. A strange zoo indeed!

It would be difficult for anyone in his right senses, however lonely he or she may be, to succumb to the lure of such a disreputable gang, despite the ostensible bribes of a quick time salvation, a transcendental orgasm, or a cheap ticket to nirvana. Quite naturally, most of us have chosen other gods. Carlos Castaneda, Teilhard de Chardin, Herbert Marcuse, and nearer home, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: to each, according to his faith, his inclination. Kahlil Gibran, Bob Dylan, Timothy Leary, Simone de Beauvoir, Langston Hughes

or Ravi Shankar: take your pick. I prefer Bo Derek; but that's another matter. The ultimate goal is clear. Buy a faith to fight your loneliness.

If only, alas, things were so easy! Neither godmen nor religion can take her on. Loneliness invariably wins hands down. Even Marxism, this century's single most alluring faith, has been humbled by her. Read the poems of Zhivago. Listen to Yevtushenko's anguished voice. Try and enter the world of Neruda, or listen to the husky whispers of Nicolas Guillen, Ho Chi Minh, Cesar Vallejo, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Paul Eluard, Rafael Alberti, Nazim Hikmet and even Mao Tse Tung. Whoever you read takes you to his private little universe, peopled by dreams and loneliness. Nothing, not even their phantasies can light up the dark and drive away the loneliness that haunts their poems. Rhetoric cannot find you a way out of the maze; nor can the subversion of the individual quest. For the answer lies within you.

The psychodelic gestalt inspired an entire generation disillusioned by Vietnam, materialistic culture and a brute establishment insensitive to their concerns and aspirations. It produced great poetry and greater music; but, above all, it produced a great generation. There were many aberrations, true. Drugs, drop-outs, desperate dreams. But it was a beautiful generation—one that believed in love, not war. They fought for survival and searched for a place in the sun, away from the paranoia of being alone. Their prophets were people like Timothy Leary and Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg and Janis Joplin. While the super-powers intensified the cold war in the sixties, they smoked away the blues and called for a new approach towards life and love.

The establishment fought them by labelling them permissive. They accused them of wasting their time, being lonely drifters, a generation gone to seed. A rather silly accusation considering the fact that in many ways this generation showed more sensitivity, and certainly greater wisdom if not maturity. Many of them opted out of the rat race and chose to come to terms with their lonely existence, without subterfuge, without sham. They brought in a new sense of values, "these rough riders, ghost poets, low-down rounders, sweet lovers, desperate characters, sad-eyed drifters and rainbow angels—those high on life from all ends of the wild blue yonder". Lonely sensitive people, touched by sorrow and a sense of history.

The poems they wrote and the songs they sang ushered in an exciting new era. Great things happened all around. From Liverpool came poets like Adrian Henri, Roger McGough and Brian Patten and, of course, the Beatles, the most original musical group of all time—tender, innovative, outrageous. From San Francisco came the beatnik poets like Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso and the guru, Allen Ginsberg, whose

visit to Calcutta in the early sixties with his boyfriend Peter Orlovsky shook the genteel cultural milieu of the city, prudish even at the best of times.

Came Janis Joplin, a tragic symbol of success and loneliness in magic symbion. Bob Dylan addressed his audience from the far side of Desolation Row. Leonard Cohen wrote and sang of a lonely, half-crazy world peopled by shadowy lovers like Suzanne and memories half-forgotten. The Beatles successfully turned a primitive form into art and created a new language and a new kind of sound altogether. Form lay shattered. The classicists were troubled. The language of tradition gave way to a new apocalyptic vision, embracing chaos, damnation and loneliness.

But it was not just music and poetry which created a moral revolution. The tired looking drop-outs crowding Sudder Street came from distant lands, dressed in tatters and smoking away their blues. Calcutta, Bombay, Kathmandu and picturesque Goa became shelters for the flower children. Ganja was cheap. Sex was an easy barter, the simplest way to pay your way through. The weather was good and life was slow-paced, a great relief from the hectic Western ambience. India was an ideal place to drop out. Drugs were easily available; and so was anonymity. And even though the odd criminal like Charles Sobhraj exploited them, and even though some of them were occasionally mugged, raped or looted, they found India a haven where they

could lose themselves effortlessly. So the rich and the bored, the young and the tired came in hordes. In search of a new quality of life. In the hope of fighting their despairing sense of disillusionment and loneliness.

When drugs first came to Calcutta and I watched my friends getting stoned, there was moral indignation all around. Parents kept their children under close vigil. Schools expelled the first experimenters, without realising that it was all a lark. No one, least of all, our teachers and parents, knew how to handle the phenomenon. They did the worst they could, by resorting to the rod and not friendly persuasion. That entrenched the drug scene all the more. More and more children got hooked on, fed up with their unsympathetic parents, stupid class teachers, and an irresponsible, unyielding establishment that never tried to understand them in the first place. While *Readers Digest* flourished by nurturing all the typical middle class fears, the software slowly gave way to hardware; cocaine took over from simple hashish, heroin from ganja; the hallucinatory drugs that gave you kicks yielded to the more dangerous varieties that got you permanently hooked on; the syringe took over from the whiff.

There was one similarity that the drugs scene had with the Naxalite movement, other than the fact that they both took roots in the same decade and around the same time—and that is, they both provided young

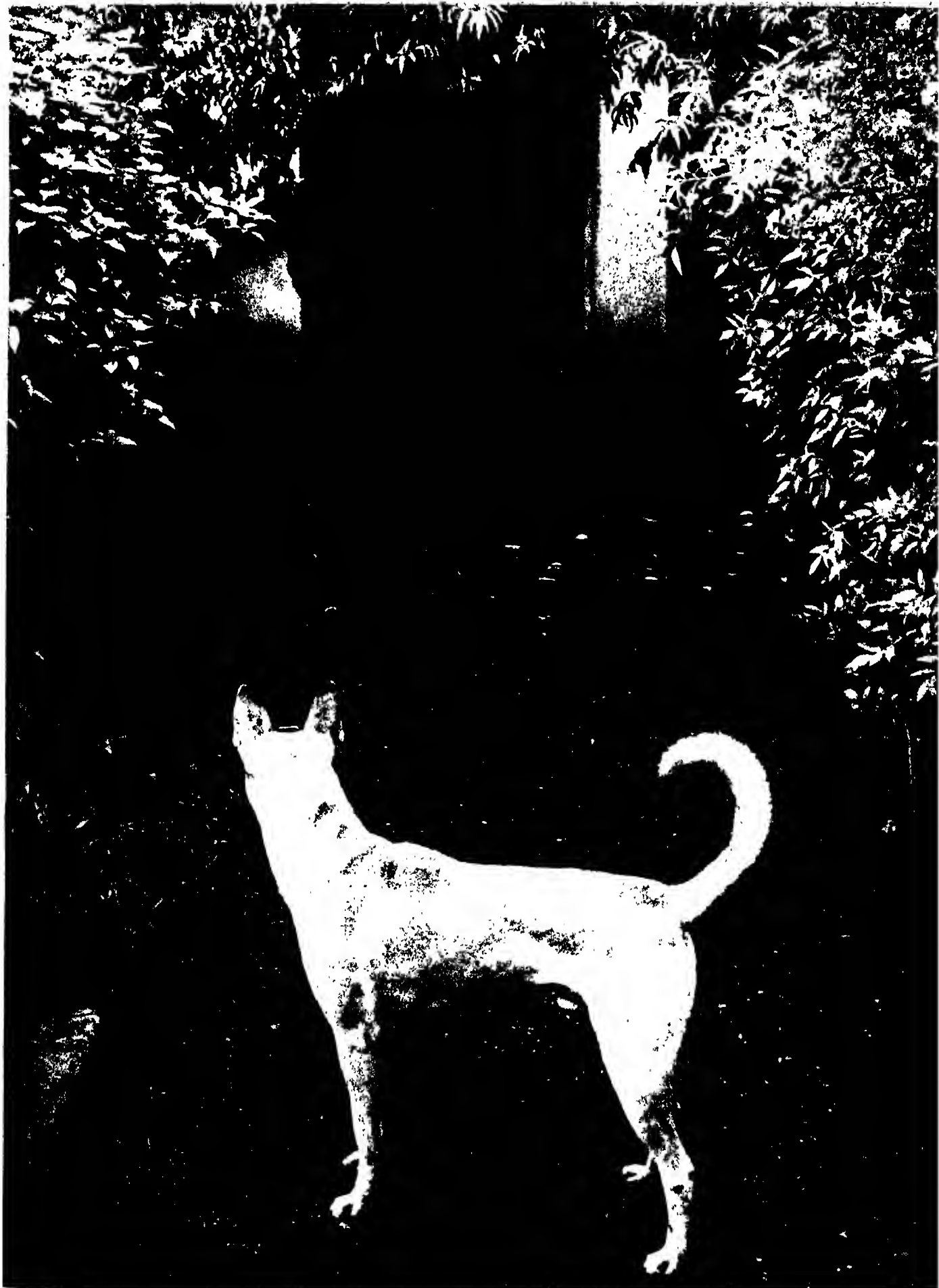
people a means of escape from the overwhelming sense of ennui, disillusionment and loneliness that was in the air at that time. Both movements had a self-destructive aura about them—and this lent them both legitimacy and glamour. But, essentially, both chased dreams.

While most of my friends succumbed to either one or the other, I stayed away—though not always far enough—because I was already hooked. Poetry had entered my life and she refused to allow me another mistress. I gave up college and decided to write. This meant taking up a small-time job and moving out of home at seventeen. But it was worth it, as I spent my next two years working on a book of poems and trying to stave off penury, with the pathetic conviction that I would ultimately make it.

LONELY people often make it. The most sensitive painters, musicians, writers, dancers and film makers have tried to come to terms with loneliness in their work, and created in the process some truly remarkable achievements. Like Jacob, they have grappled for long days and longer nights with an unknown angel. Sometimes they have won; more often they have lost. But even in such defeat they have tasted victory.

One look at Van Gogh's flaming landscapes and you would know what I mean. Pasolini's poetry; the vast,





empty landscapes that Ansell Adam captures with his camera; the anguished lyrics of John Lennon; the intense lifetime and dramatic death of Isadora Duncan; the strangely beautiful world of Borges. The loneliness of Nijinsky; the obsessive vitality of Picasso; the silent patches in the compositions of John Cage; the tiresome innovativeness of Andy Warhol; the beautiful and languid world of Apu and Durga in *Pather Panchali*; Neruda's desperate continent of destiny; the tenderness of Ravi Shankar, the brutality of *A Clockwork Orange*, and the elemental beauty of Pete Seegar's songs. All these, and almost everything else that you see in today's troubled creative landscape is tinged with loneliness, a sense of loss, and even, at times, alienation.

I see this in many of my friends. Despite fame, success and creative achievement, they remain insecure and unhappy, painfully unfulfilled.

A friend poet, for instance, lives an apparently charmed life, with her retired husband, who was once a senior bank official, and three lusty sons. Other than writing poetry and pulp fiction, she spends her time encouraging young writers and inaugurating bookshops. Though her fiction sells by the thousands in paperback, it is only in her poetry that she unveils her utterly lonely moments. Her wanting to pose as the ravishing *femme fatale* is a lot of hogwash as we all know, but behind this overt facade of desperate sinning is the ruins of a charred

sepulchre. Only stray birds come and nest in its fractured dome and then fly away. She stands alone like empty autumn branches, bereft of leaves, but she overcomes her depression by her creative energy and writes very, very beautiful poetry. And that is why, despite her illnesses, despite her gnawing loneliness, she manages to live her life to the hilt.

At a restaurant on Park Street there is a fading Anglo-Indian woman who dresses in sequin-spattered velvet dresses and sings every night, mostly about the treacheries of love. The neckline plunges to reveal breasts that have lost their pride and begun sinking. A closer look and you see the crow'sfeet hidden under layers of make-up. The rouge tries to invest the parched cheeks with a little bit of colour but, sadly, she looks more a caricature than a night club performer. And yet she was once quite a celebrity, popular even in distant Singapore. Stories say that she only costs a couple of hundred bucks a night and lives with a man who is fit to be her son. Few can understand that the maligned woman is running away from old age. She may be fun in bed, no doubt, but her loneliness is not funny at all.

When I drive past the Old People's Home on Lower Circular Road, my heart invariably misses a beat. I see a lost generation sunning themselves on balconies, not knowing when the end will come. Lorca said, "*Si muero, balcon abierto*". But for them the balconies have already opened, even though they are not dead. I

look at my old mother, fighting the good fight and admire her will to carry on. It must be a strange feeling to be seventy and old, ignored by the young and pitied by the others.

And the young? They need as much pity as the old, in a society like ours which is totally callous towards their aspirations and dreams. In this gerontocracy, where success and fame is usually shared between the infirm and the decrepit, young people suffer a benign neglect. Look at the list of Jnanpith and Sahitya Akademi award-winners—or look at the list of award-winners in any discipline...and you will know what I mean. A charmed circle of octogenarians and similar prehistoric creatures rule the roost. This exclusive coterie of decrepit academics, faded writers, literary politicians and plain senile idiots share the awards and the loot on a you-scratch-my-back-Charlie-and-I-scratch-yours-too principle. Forget my scene, the Indo-English one: anything I say on that may sound self-pitying. But it is ridiculous, for instance, that in Bengali a poet like Shakti Chattopadhyay, who together with Jibanananda Das—can be easily described as the finest poet of the language after Tagore, has never been considered for either award. Nor Sunil Gangopadhyay, whose contribution to contemporary Bengali literature is almost unparalleled, as is his popularity as a poet and fictionwriter. And look at those who get away with the lolly...writers like Sumitranandan Pant, Gajendra Mitra, Monindra Ray,



Dinkar, Putappa and Ashapura Devil The reason is simple. Ignore the young and the daring; nurture only those who do not, and cannot, question the mindless establishment. Crush the best, and crush them young. Establish the rule of the totally mediocre.

We hear of suicide and rape and murder. We come to accept homosexuals, lesbians and people suffering from incurable diseases. We recognise their problems even as we realise that the criminal is driven to desperation out of sheer frustration and the need to jump the gun. Charles Sobhraj seeks a meaning to his life through larceny or the grand crime—just as Billa gives vent to his bottled-up anger against the world he was born into. Ananta Singh turns to bank robbery at the fag end of a distinguished life as a nationalist and politician. The way public morality is going these days, it is almost impossible to distinguish the good boys from the bad. Where would you rate the Amrit Nahatas and the Bhajan Lals? The dividing lines are slowly getting blurred. But while it may be difficult to distinguish between criminals and godmen, politicians and bank robbers, we all move towards our destinies as irrevocably as the arrow that escapes the taut string of the bow and traces the course charted out for it.

The death of my father left me shattered and I can never forget his suffering over ten long days before the end, mercifully, came. In my heart there is this loneliness that no amount of laughter can wipe out but I still push on because I know that all that there is on this earth, so fleeting and transient, requires us strangely, even though we are the most transient of all. We try to search for meanings, all of us in our own little ways, to overcome the void that grows in the still centre of the heart.

A FRIEND of mine, a successful model of the sixties, hawking a special brand of ties that became almost synonymous with his face, suddenly discovered in his late forties that the big, wild life that he had lived, the high-powered job that he did in an advertising agency and the many loves that he had run through, were not worth a song. So he has settled down in late bachelorhood to spending long hours before the television set, chewing the cud of nostalgia and feeding on the infantile fare that Calcutta TV offers. He is not an unhappy man; but he is certainly a lonely man. And neither his grand passion, photography, nor his women can offer him the remedy that he seeks.

Another friend gave up his exciting career in film making to go back to some obscure family business. The last time I saw him was at a Mehdi Hasan concert, wiping his tears with a corner of a handkerchief as his more extroverted wife chose to shout wah wah in her raucous voice. Mehdi Hasan's appeal is similar to the Hindi

Rajin Rai



film song's. This mushy, sentimental fare can appeal only to a special kind of mind—the mind of a moron.

But things were once different. I remember the early songs of Sahir, Kaifi, Majrooh and Shallendra. They were exquisite poems, evocatively sung. Particularly in the Guru Dutt films; and particularly on the themes of loneliness and love. Guru Dutt himself came to epitomise the young man, waylost and vulnerable, in a world that is cruel, unyielding, and traumatically lonely. Neither love nor tenderness can win him over. Tragically he came to live his roles and died the same way, a wreck who chose suicide as the simplest way out. To quote Faiz's poem on Tanhai, So gai rasta tak-takke har-ek rah-guzar; ajnabi khak-ne dhundla-diya qadmon ke suragh. Gul karo shamin barha-do mai o mina o ayagh, apne bekhwab hiva-ron ko muqaffal kar-lo; ab yahan koi nahin, koi nahin aegal which in translation would go

"The roads that waited have gone to sleep; alien dust has wiped out all foot-steps.

Put out the candles, keep away the glasses,

lock up your sleepless portals.

No one is here. No one will ever come!"

Such loneliness is the only truth. There is no way out, no redemption.

As for me, I have converted my loneliness into a riotous celebration. I enjoy being alone today. And as I watch Rina playing with our children, forgetting herself and her problems, her griefs and her loneliness, I realise that she has achieved in her own way what I have searched for so long. The world that she has built around her, in all her innocence, helps her to face the emptiness within. Someday perhaps I shall be able to do the same. And from loneliness, at last, will spring a joyous elan and I shall begin to come to terms with a stranger called I. ■

LIVING

Shuttle diplomacy

"I was quite sure I would win the title," Prakash said earlier. "I had been acclimated and had also got used to various kinds of shuttle-cocks. Besides, my earlier wins had given me tremendous confidence. I think Liem Swie King really played as well as he has been playing in the past. I'm told that the Indonesian Government has been accused of not giving him enough training facilities or something like that." Prakash, who shaved his head prior to the Edmonton Games, didn't bother to return to Tirupati this time,

but he was on his way to his favourite shrine to offer his thanks. Meanwhile, his charming fiancée revelled in a blaze of publicity, with everyone clamouring to know what Prakash really told her when he spoke to her long-distance shortly after winning the title. She managed pretty well too, says Ashish Rajadhyaksha, keeping the media happy with her comments on her favourite beat group (Boney M) and her prospects of marriage to her affianced champion, who must be one of India's most popular ambassadors by now.



Mukesh Pariani

Culture, anyone?

It was a star-studded occasion at Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan on March 20, when literary and other luminaries of all nationalities gathered to pool their resources and ideas. They were there for the inauguration of the International Conference for the Defence of National Cultures and Education for Peace and Disarmament, organised by the Premchand Centenary Celebration Committee. The idea behind the conference was to establish and promote the culture of the Third World countries as it is felt that western influences are permeating rapidly. The imported "TV-Coca-Cola-bubble gum culture" is attracting a vast number of followers, to the dismay of many. Said Faiz Ahmed Faiz, distinguished Pakistani poet, "It is necessary to identify the culture imposed on us by western imperialism as different from the culture which lives within us". Mr V. P. Sathe, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, who inaugurated the function, proclaimed "Premchand was a son of the soil. He took us from Ivory towers to remote corners of villages in India".

The Aga goes gaga



His Royal Highness the Aga Khan, while blitzing through India, was engaged in spraying his not-too-inconsiderable dubloons to such charities as would require his attention, according to his very own Press attache. His Majesty, however, kept his own interests pretty close to his heart, or so it would seem. For instance, Ashish Rajadhyaksha points out, he did not let on that one of his many interests in Bombay concerned discreet enquiries about the controversial

Nizam's jewels. The Aga Khan took on the mantle of leader of the Ismaili Muslim community in 1957 when he was only 20 years old, at the behest of his grandfather. When the HRH Prince Aga Khan Ismailia Federal Council for India (recently established to supervise all the philanthropic work he is doing in India) was contacted to confirm the theory that he went gaga over the Nizam's jewels, they denied it stoutly.

"Do you know what makes a best-seller? I hate to say so, but it is a question of luck." Now that was quite a frank confession, coming from bestselling authoress M. M. Kaye. During her recent visit to New Delhi, she told Saumitra Banerjee "I wrote *The Far Pavilions* between grandchildren, cooking and rushing upstairs whenever anyone wanted something. I kept adding bits and pieces and finally realised that the manuscript was quite massive. I don't know how they (the publishers) took the entire thing". The book, incidentally, was written under her maiden name. As she herself pointed out, it was her desire to portray India from a different point of view, and which was made possible by the fact that she has toured the country extensively. "I was travelling through Rajasthan and thought that what most people see in this place is barren land but I love

OKaye



Geoffrey Reeve, M. M. Kaye and her husband

it: it's an aspect of an empire you can't think of." *The Far Pavilions*, the story of a love affair between a British Army officer and an

Indian princess, is set in the late nineteenth century and the authoress has highlighted the dilemma of the princess when she is forced to choose between her Indian heritage and the man she loves. "You see, at that point of time it was very difficult for eastern and western values to co-exist although now of course that is quite different. When I was in India prejudices were very strong." Her book is also being made into a television series, the rights for which have been bought by British producer-director Geoffrey Reeve. Said Reeve, relaxing in the Ashok suite of the Maurya Hotel, "We have a lot of research to do with regard to the period Mrs Hamilton has covered but we intend to start shooting in about a year's time. Most of the shooting will be done at Rajasthan and some of it in NEFA. Later on maybe I will make it into a full-length film". And what about the actors? "I have not decided on them as yet, but I will include many Indian actors."

"It was a tremendous feeling. It was great to be among the top brass of the Army, Navy and the Air Force. Besides, compared to the other recipients, I was much younger." That was former Indian skipper Sunil Gavaskar speaking to Hareesh Munwani about the New Delhi ceremony at which the President awarded him the Padma Bhushan. "I sat next to Mother Teresa," he said. "I really admire that woman for her simplicity. The first thing she said to me was 'I wish all the money which has been spent on this function could instead have been utilised to build homes for the poor. Don't forget, when you are calculating that amount, you have to

Bat luck



take into account the cost of the film that the various photographers use as well".

"When I received the Arjuna Award earlier, we had a complete dress rehearsal in the

morning, while the actual function took place in the afternoon. I thought the same procedure would be followed at this function too, but I was wrong. To my great surprise, there was no rehearsal and the function itself was held in the morning. Had I known this I would have arranged to go back to Bombay the same afternoon rather than catch the late night flight back. I am honoured to receive the award but this would not have been possible without the efforts and cooperation of my team mates. After all, cricket is a team game." Rather modest for a man who has scored 5974 runs in Test cricket.

Carta was here

"People say that we are professional...but we bloody well ought to be," say the members of Magna Carta, the group that passed through Calcutta recently. There were four of them: Chris Simpson, George Norris, Al Fenn and Lee Abbot, the quietest of them all, and together they have a promising new sound. "We call it song and acoustic music," they told Patrick and Arijit Ghose. The Magna Carta that came to India has just two members, Simpson and

Abbot, from the original band which cut as many as 14 albums and which broke up recently in Spain (The problem was basic; it was boredom, stateness. Some wanted to work it out, some didn't).

Traditional English folk and American Nashville and country music have been their major influences. In addition, they also draw inspiration from a wide spectrum of musicians including Eric Clapton, whom they consider the greatest white

"blues" guitarist. Chris Simpson, the leader of the band, feels that the general trend of music will move back to "song" from disco and punk rock. Of the latter they say, "The Rolling Stones did it while disco," they affirm, "is dead". Like a lot of other musicians, they are familiar with highs but as Simpson emphasised, "It's a personal thing and it has nothing to do with our music." Gallons of tea were their stimulants. After India, the band has two concerts lined up in the United Kingdom, following which there is a tour of Norway. Meanwhile, they plan to release a new album on which songs like *Danny, Occasional Cannonball, Highway to Spain*, which were performed in India, will feature.

And Indian audiences? They were "fantastic, listening audiences". But as George Norris, the butt of all the jokes onstage said, "Many people think they know what they like; actually they usually like what they know".

Verse and worse

There was a time when every young Calcuttan was both a radical and a poet. The popular coffee house in College Street served as a meeting point for poetry and revolution and the sessions were long and heady. In the last few years, poetry has discovered many new pastures and poetry conferences, *mushairas* and *kavi sammelans* have become red letter days on the city's cultural calendar. And sometimes, poetry conferences are unusual by themselves. One such gathering was organised on March 22 at the Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad on Shakespeare Sarani. What made it unusual was that poets of five different languages got together and sang or recited from one common platform. For the discerning connoisseur, there was sufficient variety to hold his attention throughout the evening.

The poem which was applauded the most, as S. N. M. Abdi found out that evening, was Kobita Sinha's masterpiece in Bengali. Haraprasad Patnaik, well known poet, regaled the audiences with his *Sanyahsi* in Oriya. Among others who read out their poems were Hiren Babu Singh in Manipuri, Liladevi Jha in Maithili and Hiren Bhattacharya in Assamese. The poetry meet was presided over by Umashankar Joshi who had the last word. He is a renowned prose writer but on this occasion, he ended the evening, uncharacteristically, with a short poem of his own.



High ... and dry

So Pondicherry turns wet again, after an arid seven-month spell. Although there is jubilation in the Union Territory, the news has not caused much of a stir in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. This lack of excitement is due to the fact that, according to the grapevine, whoever forms the new Government in the state is expected to end or suspend prohibition. Interestingly enough, Bala Pashanoor, briefly the Minister for Petroleum and Chemicals in Charan Singh's

Cabinet, did not contest the recent Parliamentary elections from Pondicherry, his home town. "Had he contested from Pondy, he would have been hit by empty booze bottles," commented one senior Pandy citizen who was sore about not being able to use his army pension on liquid poison. Earlier, it was MGR who had relaxed prohibition in Tamil Nadu, with the result that liquor permits were easier to come by. However, notes Arthur Pais, his good

work was undone by Governor Prabhudas Patwari as soon as the MGR Ministry was dismissed. But Madras is now getting ready for wet days. One reliable indication is that restaurant owners in the city are on the lookout for brawny waiters who can double as bouncers in the event of a drunken brawl. Meanwhile, slums in the major cities of the state have started selling rotgut openly. P. S. The harshest variety is referred to as "Patwari strong".

THE WORLD

Frenchmen Gauffed

French farmers, and now politicians never fail to disgust Britain. Or is it the other way round? The farmers were strongly backing a move to oust the UK from the EEC because of its opposition to a common European agricultural policy that promised to benefit them enormously. The scheme was finally dropped. Some French political leaders shared the farmers' resentment, though they never aired their views openly, until recently. Jacques Chirac, the former neo-Gaullist French Premier, in a TV broadcast lashed out at Britain for jeopardising the EEC's most costly agricultural scheme and said that General Charles De Gaulle would not have hesitated to



Mrs Thatcher with President Giscard d'Estaing

expel her. The broadcast, of course, is believed to have been made with different motives: Mr Chirac is a sure contender for the next election to the French Presidency and is keen to project himself as a staunch Gaullist. The French-British tiff obviously came in handy. Mr Chirac is the leader of the largest Party in the French Parliament and is wooing the farmers to maintain his Party's popularity among the large rural population. The speech followed a statement of Britain's complaint by Margaret Thatcher over French TV a week before. The former French premier accused her of acting in the British tradition: betraying "le fair play".

Carting it all

After a series of caucus and primary defeats at Iowa and Illinois, Edward Kennedy, the underdog for the Democratic candidature in the US Presidential elections, came from behind to defeat Jimmy Carter at New York and Connecticut. This in spite of trailing in the



Jimmy Carter

pre-election poll. The reason for the upset was a wave of Jewish opposition to President Carter's West Asian policies. Jews, incidentally, form a sizable part of New York's population and the resentment against Mr Carter appears to have been a sudden development. Computer projections weighted returns from the Democratic Party race so heavily against Mr Kennedy that there seemed virtually no doubt about who would be the eventual winner. Prior to the New York and Connecticut elections, 15 per cent of the Party's votes were already counted of which Mr Carter secured an impressive 66 per cent, Kennedy 30 per cent, Governor Jerry Brown of California three per cent, and a minor independent one per cent. Mr Kennedy was helped in his campaign by his celebrated sister-in-law, Jacqueline Onassis, though not to much effect. Meanwhile the race for the Republican candidature was going the way of Ronald Reagan, despite a minor defeat he suffered against former CIA director, George Bush, at Connecticut. Earlier, all three major US TV networks predicted that Mr Reagan, who fought Mr Carter in the last election, would defeat the liberal Illinois Congressman John Anderson. If popular calculations are correct, the 1980 election will once again be a Carter-Reagan show.

Diplomatic cops

Biyaganage Payasena Fernando (48), Sri Lanka's ambassador to the UN resigned in a huff after his reported involvement in a sex scandal and anti-Government activities. Mr Fernando had come to Colombo to attend a conference of the country's diplomats, and stayed back after it was over to tender his resignation. The reason for the decision was an official investigation into his activities at New York, that appears to have found him guilty of subversive activities and indulgent living. The diplomat was believed to have actually been victimised for belonging to the wrong group in the ruling National Party. The state-

controlled Lake House and Times groups of newspapers reported that a "high power team of police investigators" had gone to New York twice and found certain vital secret documents in the embassy's premises. The fact that Mr Fernando's predecessor in the post, Mr Shirley Amarasinghe, too was subject to investigation suggests that the Sri Lanka ambassador's post in the UN is jinxed. Mr G. V. P. Samarasinghe a senior public servant holding the post of secretary to the Sri Lanka cabinet was appointed Mr Fernando's successor, while the latter planned to return to practice at the bar, his original profession.

Ssshhh !

Noise is known to drive people mad. Hence the row over Concorde, and Calcutta's Puja loudspeakers. West Germany has a unique way of tackling the menace. A bill defining tolerable levels of traffic noise was recently passed by the Bundestag. The bill requires protective measures to be taken in all affected houses, located at places where the tolerable level of decibels is exceeded. Where the protection involves installation of sound-insulated, windows and doors, the house owner will have to bear 25 per cent of the cost, leaving the rest to the kindly state. The

tolerance level for residential areas, hospitals, old people's homes and schools has been fixed at 70 decibels during day and 60 at night. This level equals the sound of surf on a sea beach or a waterfall, though the form may not be as pleasant of course. Noise protection for new streets is even more stringent—62 decibels during the day and 52 at night—and those for hospitals, schools and old people's homes situated on new streets is even less—60 decibels during the day, and 50 at night. The Act covers all West German streets and newly laid rail routes.

Accident by design

For the first time, a motor car manufacturing firm was charged in Winamac, Indiana, USA, with actual homicide because of a suspected defect in one of its cars which met with an accident killing three. The car, a Pinto 1973 model, a product of the famous Ford Motor company, is the subject of a controversy in the USA. Three teenaged girls travelling in the car were burned to death in August 1976, when a van hit the rear, causing the gasoline tank to explode. Earlier the same year, the Ford company had recalled 1.5 million of its Pintos to strengthen the gasoline tank. But the families of two of the victims did not receive recall notices from the company. The judge Mr Harold Staffeldt refused to let all the prosecution witnesses testify, and also refused to produce

all of the 200 documents it had brought to prove its case. While the prosecution relied mainly on law students and volunteers, Ford's lawyers concentrated on the specific charge in the case, and ignored the more general charges against the company. They proved with the help of a number of photographs and other evidence that the car was hit when it was stationary and not in motion. The impact of the collision was thus roughly 50 miles per hour, and not as slight as 20-30 miles per hour as the prosecution had alleged. Under existing regulations for car manufacturers, a gasoline tank should resist explosion if hit by a vehicle travelling at upto 30 miles per hour. That clinched the issue. The lesson: never try fighting a corporation with lots of money.

Teased and released

Salamat Ali, the well-known Pakistan correspondent for the far eastern *Economic Review*, who was tried by a military tribunal on charges of inciting hatred between provinces, and dismembering Pakistan, has finally been released after four months rigorous imprisonment. Salamat had written an article in the *Review* (October 19, 1979) entitled "An upheaval is forecast" on the situation in unruly Baluchistan which quoted anonymous statements from a number of people to prove his point. Though the prosecution chief witness Col Abdur Rauf Khan admitted that his article was a "reasonable interpretation" of the situation in the province, Ali was found guilty and given a year's imprisonment. The conviction led to world-wide protests and

the junta reacted by claiming that the imprisoned journalist was a Russian agent. A newsheet called *Pakistan News* published by the Pakistan embassy in London also alleged that Ali had written his controversial *Review* article without visiting Baluchistan. Eventually, the *Review* took up the cudgels for Ali. The magazine's editor Derek Davies subsequently showed the Pakistan Embassy in London evidence that Ali had in fact gone to Baluchistan to do the article.

Mr Ali's recent release is an indication of Pakistani vulnerability to world pressure. Mr Ali had been released, according to officials, because his sentence had been remitted. The journalist was reported to have stepped out of the Islamabad prison on March 29 and taken a taxi straight home.

Ayatollah at stake

Demonstrations, crackers, burning effigies. These are common in any angry city. But in Spain, they're part of the festivities. The place was Valencia, and the occasion the annual *fallas*, a festival of bonfires and fireworks, devoted to St Joseph. The whole city reverberates with the sound of bursting crackers as hundreds of figures costing more than two million dollars go up in flames. Each quarter of the city produces a tableau of ninots or life-size effigies, which are like waxworks of celebrated personalities. The burning is meant to draw attention to a scandal or abuse. Often the figures burnt are benign caricatures. And so it was this year when among the 611 effigies Left wing Spanish and Muslim students noticed one of Ayatollah Khomeini. The protest was immediate and loud. According to custom, one of the many figures is actually retrieved and kept in a museum as a memento of the festival. But the Iranians were not content with that alone. They wanted the effigy rescued and kept out of sight. Faster than it took to pronounce "Ayatollah Khomeini" Valencia's governor was ordered to do the needful. The fiesta committee agreed

Operation Shah



The Shah and Sadat

In a move that took the world by surprise, the deposed Shah of Iran and his wife left their place of exile in Panama for another on March 23. The ailing and reduced Shah arrived in Cairo on March 24 and was received by a sympathetic President Anwar Sadat who said the deposed Shah had come to stay "permanently". The flight, which took off moments after an Iranian delegation seeking the Shah's extradition to Iran for trial arrived in Panama, was allegedly planned by the USA. The Shah was later taken to

heavily guarded Maadi Military Hospital where he was successfully operated for removal of a cancerous spleen on March 29. The team of doctors who operated on him was drawn from the USA and Egypt and headed by US heart surgeon Michael DeBakey. The Shah was kept in intensive care. Reports appearing in an Egyptian weekly said that the Shah's trip to Egypt was arranged in less than an hour, and long before the Iranian delegation reached Panama. Incidentally, Iranian authorities had reported-

ly even ordered the former ruler's assassination. In a despatch from Washington, the weekly said that the Shah's flight was settled when one of his secretaries phoned the Egyptian ambassador in Washington to ask him if Egypt was still willing to welcome the former monarch. After contacting President Anwar Sadat, the ambassador promptly replied that the invitation still stood. The Shah's departure was known only on March 23, when he left. As for how long he will stay in Egypt, no one knows.

THIS sudden spurt of publicity around Padmini Kolhapure, the RK discovery, makes a lot of sense. Neetu had once gone through a lot of tensions worrying about a possible Chintu-Tina link-up, knowing the stories she heard of the two of them on location. Now Padmini is almost a competitor for Tina. And you know, a lot of publicity revolves round any RK gal—budding or otherwise! Padmini is Neetu's safe bet: she is cute and curvy, which a heroine should be, and she is not *chalu* like you-know-who!

BIRDS of a feather flock together and in films the ones who hit together or flop together, flock together. Look what happened to Salim-Javed, now that they are "out" with most of the big camps



Rajesh: A black sheep in most camps

they were working for. They are ganging up with Rajesh Khanna who is also a black sheep with most camps: on his front, things

are looking better, with one or two successful films behind him. And to make the combination a bit more spicy, they are thinking of roping in Rishi Kapoor and also throwing in Tina Munim. That makes the whole thing very *chat-patti*.

SHATRU cannot understand—or maybe, does not want to—why women keep falling for him in spite of the permanent competition they face from Poonam Chandramani. Reena is not the only leech in his professional life. The number of girls going ga ga over him is many. Sometimes Shatru's outright rejection is mistaken for an open invitation to cling to him. Not that the man is complaining. He is a true Sagittarian—and that means he loves being subjected to the-more-the-merrier kind of treatment from the opposite sex!

THAT new boy Deepak Parasher is every inch a lady-killer. He is simply irresistible to girls who go in for the 'tall-slim-fair good-looks' variety of men. And he has this one-way phone which keeps ringing at frequent intervals, which proves he is very popular. But it is embarrassing for him to be interrupted when he is engaged in important meeting by some girl who is desperately trying to meet him. You can see the blushes come and go with each brush-off he gives every time the phone rings. He's the guy who is likely to keep getting into trouble of a very shapely kind, for



Tina: Chintu's ex-flame and Neetu's despair

having a face which is his (mis)fortune! If he is really bothered by the deluge of girls after him, that is.

AND look at the fast work put in by Rishi Neetu. Before they could return from their honeymoon the Kapoors received a telegram saying the two were parents-to-be! The two would be returning with a very young guest. The couple took a long time to decide on getting married—about five years—and even then Chintu had to be literally bullied into the engagement. But looks like they've made up for the delay and got down to serious Khandani perpetuation on the double!

MOUSHUMI CHATTERJI has a grouse against most people, whom she blames for her failing career. For instance, she says that Amitabh got her out of the film with Shakti Samanta, *Barsaat Ki Baat* when he opted for Raakhee. Being Shakti's discovery she expected the role of the blind girl especially after the director spoke to her about it. Then she found Raakhee had been recruited. So she concludes that Amitabh had got her into the film. But she doesn't know that the superstar doesn't go about recommending heroines these days: the makers who take him automatically look for a saleable proposition and that, Moushumi isn't. We presume Raakhee is!

Padmini Kolhapure: RK's child-woman



KHAAS BAAT.

SATHYA studio, one of the duller spots in the city is suddenly active and visitors are finding it difficult to get in. It is possible that **MGR** has re-started on his acting career, or preparations in that direction are going on. Before these words can appear, **MGR** would begin shooting for *Anna Enn Deivam* one of the films he could not finish in 1977.

One can't vouch for the authenticity of this story which is being circulated in the city. It seems **MGR** has forgotten his fencing and one of the scenes of his current films required him to play the sword-wielding Robin Hood. But he just couldn't put life into his fighting. The director of the movie was exasperated and the villain too was feeling embarrassed. And then some wisecrack suggested that the rehearsals should continue for a longer period and the villain must wear a mask resembling **Karunanidhi**.

ACTRESS **Lakshmi** and director **S. Ramanathan** have a peculiar kind of love-hate relationship. Three years ago I heard him cursing **Lakshmi** for

acting bitchy regarding a role in a Hindi film opposite **Jeetendra**. "I fixed a handsome remuneration for her, and yet she wouldn't cooperate", he lamented. But last year he went out of his way to woo **Lakshmi** to act in his Kannada film *Nanobba Kalla* opposite **Raikumar**. The film was only a mild success and **Ramanathan** hasn't blamed **Lakshmi**. But he's once again complaining that she wasted his recent trip to **Madras**. **Ramanathan** wanted to complete some important scenes of a long pending Hindi film (whose title keeps on changing) which stars **Moushumi**, **Jeetendra** and **Lakshmi**. Though **Lakshmi** offered him all cooperation, she backed out at the last minute. It seems the producer of the film owed some money to **Lakshmi**. "But I had made arrangements for that too", sighed **Ramanathan**. "But she wanted the shooting postponed. I know she's a terribly talented actress but when will she realise the harm she's doing herself by her moods? This is precisely why she lost the Telugu market..."



Pratap Pothan and Vanitha in "Chandra Bimbam"



Jayabharathy does the role of a nymphomaniac in "Chandra Bimbam"

AFTER the **Rajnikant-Sridevi** pair, the next most popular pair in the making is that of **Rathi** and **Rajni**. Apart from being featured in **Devar's** *Anbumkku Naan Adimai*, they are also cast in *Muarattu Kalai*, a film being produced by **AVM** who are venturing into film production after a gap of many years.

On the sets, **Rathi** and **Rajni** seem to enjoy each other's company. For one thing both of them are "outsiders" to the Tamil industry. **Rajni**, the bus-conductor turned actor is actually a **Maharashtrian** from **Karnataka**. And those who accuse him of speaking Tamil with an alien (Kannada) accent may be surprised if some of his Kannada producers accused him of speaking that language with a **Marathi** accent. And **Rathi** is an Anglicised **Punjabi**, who took up **Tamil** films and became a success overnight.

The good, the bad and the lifted

By ANIL GROVER

ITEM : "The ancient Greeks were thinkers because they had luckily no prophet to command 'Stop thinking, and follow me!'"

Item: "No lover of the Krishna legend, and the poetry woven round him and Radha and the Gopis, should visit Madhura (sic) and Brindavan. For it would rudely break the spell of that legend and that poetry. The two ancient towns are shockingly dirty and stinking, and their pandas are ravenous wolves."

Item: "Humanism should consist of a harmonious blending of the power of Siva, the compassion of Buddha, the love of Christ, the zeal of Mohammad, the materialism of Kanada, the logic of Nagarajuna, and finally the defiance of death shown by Socrates in refusing to disown what he believed to be the truth."

Item : "Gandhi was oversexed before he became a saint. Once sublimated, his over-sensuousness had provided him with the immense reserves of power."

Item: "Morally India was never as sick as it is now and perhaps never before in India's history were there as many saints as there are at present (1970)."

Item: "A journalist who works under censorship is no better than a performing flea."

Item: "The gods of a barbarous people are crude and cruel. As they get civilized, their gods, too, get refined. Kali demands blood, Krishna is content with milk."

Perhaps the best way to review a book of this nature, written like the *Notebooks* of Samuel Butler, is to hand-pick some of the 700-odd items and let the reader decide for himself. But the selection, perforce, tends to get subjective and one must realise that the above items are obviously the ones that personally appealed. Comments vary from personalities (Frank Moraes, Nehru, Marx, Dayanand, Amir Khusrau, to mention a few) to abstract ideas (humanism, museology, myth and reality, Saivism)...with factual comments on the former and opinions on the latter.

In such a book, it is more than normally interesting to know the man behind the comments. Narla Venkateswara Rao—or V. R. Narla as he prefers to style himself turned 72 in December, 1979, and is well known for "his uncompromising stand against sham, hypocrisy, cant, irrationalism, super-

stition, fear and deceit", as Mr Sushil Mukherjee (managing director of the publishing company) tells us in his note. Having written a score of books in Telugu and five in English, his writings have been translated into several languages. Mr Narla took an active part in the freedom struggle and has held several eminent posts (member of Rajya Sabha; alternate delegate UNESCO General conference, Paris; member of the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi, member of the First Press Council of India, etc.). He has received a double D. Lit. and was editor of *Andhra Pradesh* (1942-59) and *Andhra Jyoti* (1960-77), and had to leave the latter during the Emergency on matter of principles, even though he was of advanced age, and ailing then.



And it is here that we see the real man Narla. "I have deliberately kept out of this volume the entries which I made in my *Notebooks* during...the Emergency. My reason for this is simple...right from 1962...I had a strong aversion to her (Mrs Gandhi). And since 1969, I have developed positive detestation for her as one of the most selfish, unscrupulous and vindictive politicians in recent times...And yet, I did not campaign against her Emergency rule...because I had to ask myself whether it would be right on my part to expose the rotary press, and other printing machinery of the journal, its buildings, etc. on which the public has invested two and half million rupees, to the risk of outright confiscation...I should have, I admit, resigned my editorship forthwith...All that I

could say is that. ... I wrote nothing in support...Indeed, during the whole period I stopped writing even on non-political subjects. Be that as it may, I was guilty of the grave crime of silence when all the higher values of life were being ground to dust, and on that account, I have, I believe, forfeited my right to publish now what I thought at the time."

When a man of such exemplary courage and more, honesty, publishes entries from *Notebooks* which he has been maintaining from 1955 they give an insight into him. "While it is not my intention to hurt people ... I do want to shock them ... What I want is not that my views and opinions, my thoughts and observations or my contentions and conclusions should be approved... I will be more than content if they are discussed."

The author has deliberately spaced out longer views with shorter ones to avoid monotony; and such a book makes convenient reading. Yet, one is strongly advised to read it in bits and parts to avoid encountering repetitious thoughts on the same subject often (natural, of course). It also saves one from forming an unfair impression that the author is preaching. Some items which the author finds necessary, are datelined, but one certainly feels that a chronological order would have given a better perspective to the book in helping one to trace the growth, or otherwise, of the author.

There are, naturally, plenty of entries which are dull/unconvincing/trite. To quote: "If life is an illusion immortality is a delusion" Or: "Only a diseased mind can dismiss life as a disease". Or: "Science will be dangerous tool only when man is a damned fool". While his comments on religion are, by and large—opinionated, there is at least one which is well-barbed: "There are many kinds of nervous disorders; one of them is religious ecstasy."

More unfortunately, when the author writes: "Tell me what your religion is and I can tell you what your pet prejudices are", Or: "Lifting from one book is plagiarism; lifting from a dozen or more is research that fetches you a Ph.D.". Both items ring a bell. This, after all, isn't research.

Gods, Goblins and Men, by V. R. Narla. Minerva Associates. Rs. 50

Beginning April 13

This week the Sun alone is in Aries, Venus is in Taurus and Mars, Jupiter, Rahu and Saturn are conjoined in Leo. Neptune and Uranus are in Scorpio, Ketu alone is in Aquarius and Mercury is in Pisces. The Moon will be moving through Aries, Taurus and Gemini from Pisces.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) You will have several excellent opportunities to expand your business activities as to be praised by all your friends and relatives. Let your own intuition be your guide to fortune. Prosperity is predicted on the financial and business front and all your hard work will now meet with recognition. You are likely to acquire a number of costly, luxury items. **Good dates:** 13, 15, 17 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 6, 4 and 5. **Favourable direction:** South and East.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) Be guided by your own intuition. Your interests will be advanced and a promotion will crown a successful week. Your business front will remain steady. An old person is not likely to cause trouble. A happy romance or "event" is probable. Winning prizes is also well within the range of possibility. Sports and speculation will lead to profits. **Good dates:** 14, 16, and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 4 and 2. **Favourable direction:** West.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) Be patient in the face of serious, but often unexpected obstacles to the realisation of your ambitions. Devote a little extra attention to minute details. After a minor setback due to disagreements, your business conditions will improve rapidly and you will make remarkable progress. Gain through the occult is also predicted. Avoid all disputes. **Good dates:** 15, 16, 18 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** Nil. **Favourable direction:** North.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) The results will not be in keeping with your efforts. Both physical and mental strain will be experienced. Do not lose your temper. Suits and debts will cause great anxiety and there will not be any easy solution for your problem. Eschew questionable romance and safeguard the health of womenfolk in the family. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) An unexpected journey is likely to fetch you profitable business contracts. You can expect greater financial gain but exercise caution and circumspection in dealings with the opposite sex. Suits and debts will cause anxiety and you may not find an easy solution. Seek and act upon the advice of elders and family friends. Do not gamble. **Good dates:** 13, 14, 16 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 3 and 10. **Favourable direction:** East and South.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) This week your outlook remains fairly favourable though perhaps not quite as much as last week. Apart from a small loss or annoyance (probably in some way linked with a relative), your prospects are encouraging. You are advised to be on your guard against deception, especially in love affairs. Servicemen will experience an enjoyable week. **Good dates:** 14, 15 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** North.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) You are advised to take great pains not to antagonise your employer. Pay great attention to business and professional pursuit. A fair measure of success and good fortune is shown, including gain through speculation or gambling. Make no important changes during this week. **Good dates:** 17 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 10, 7 and 4. **Favourable direction:** South.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) You will be able to solve your pending problems involving finance. Courage, faith and fortitude will help you greatly in successfully tackling the problems you face. A good week for love and marriage correspondence. Your home front will be happy. Professionals are likely to get transfer orders. Friends and relatives will praise your efforts. Wait for letters before taking a crucial decision. **Good dates:** 13, 15, 17 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** West.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) The planets do not favour you. Therefore be content to mark time and wait for better days. Exercise extreme caution in all your dealings. Practise restraint in all your activities. Check all irritable tendencies and do not criticise others. Check extravagance. After a somewhat difficult beginning, things will improve. Progress will be registered on all fronts. **Good dates:** 16, 18 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 9 and 11. **Favourable direction:** East.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) A beneficial change of job or residence is likely. This week will prove to be a happy one and moderately fortunate provided you check all extravagant tendencies. You will further benefit through inheritance. Seek and act upon the advice of elders. A secret friendship or association will prove helpful. Love and domestic affairs will bring joy and good fortune. **Good dates:** 13, 14, 17 and 10. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 9 and 10. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Stellar portents are somewhat conflicting. Difficulties and unexpected reversals beyond own control will nevertheless, be mitigated by help from an unexpected source. Watch your finances closely. Avoid property deals, foreign investments and speculation. **Good dates:** 15, 16 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) Your boundless energy and ambition will result in success but caution is advised against physical overstrain and in dealings with elderly relatives. Secret matters will progress and young people and intellectuals will contribute to your success and well-being. Valuable new friendships are forecast and beneficial journeys and changes are likely. **Good dates:** 13, 14, 16 and 19. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable directions:** North and West.

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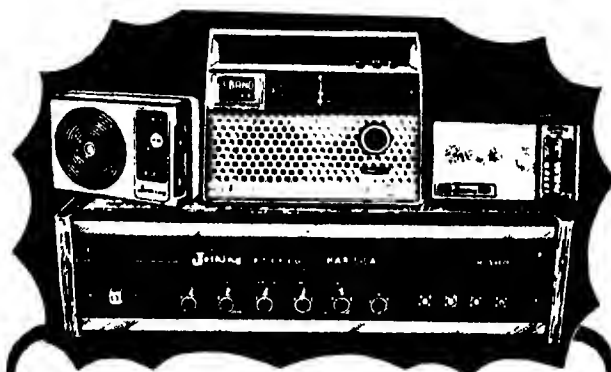
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HYDERABAD: A 70-year-old city advocate was convicted on March 19 and sentenced to pay a fine of Re 1 for breaking a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi hanging in a courtroom by pelting stones at it. Delivering the judgment the second metropolitan magistrate, Mr S. L. S. Ahmed observed that years of association in the administration of justice as a lawyer has not taught the accused the first lesson of obeisance to the law. "It looks now ridiculous to send the accused to jail. But nevertheless, he should be reminded that at least once he was not a gentleman", the magistrate said. According to the prosecution, the lawyer, Mr B. G. Keskar, trespassed into the court hall of the metropolitan sessions judge during lunch recess on March 28, 1978 and broke the photograph of Mahatma Gandhi. The prosecution examined seven witnesses, including the then metropolitan sessions judge, Mr I. Ramnarayan Reddy — *Indian Express* (Rita Jha, Bombay)

HYDERABAD: The Army lost one of its tanks at Nallapally village in Medak district during the recent Lok Sabha elections. Mr Chenna Reddy, Chief Minister confirmed in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly that an Army tank left at Nallapally had been stolen. The police had identified the culprit. He was likely to be arrested soon and the tank recovered — *Statesman* (Sanyajit Singha, Bankura)

SAMASTIPUR: A cancer specialist and a police officer are among the three persons arrested in connexion with a train robbery between Kukatpore and Hayaghat railway stations in the Samastipur division of the North-

eastern Railway—*Statesman* (Bulbul Chakrabarti, Batanagar)

KANPUR: A young woman, disappointed by her dark complexion, hanged herself to death in Sarojini Nagar area here. Ramesh Kumari 23, a newly married girl, allegedly committed suicide at her parental home in Nazirabad. The girl had complained to her mother that her husband disliked her because of the complexion—*Pioneer* (Indira Saxena, Kanpur)

NEW DELHI: Shortage of paper today (March 10) stalled proceedings in the court of the metropolitan magistrate, Mr S. K. Tandon. The magistrate in a communication to the district and sessions judge said that all the 30 cases fixed for the day were adjourned because of non-availability of stationery. Judicial officers at the New Delhi courts have for the last two months been complaining of shortage of paper—*Times of India* (S. M. Mehta, Chandigarh)

BASTI: A businessman, Premchand Gupta, of Khalilabad, is reported to have died soon after receiving a notice from the sales tax office demanding payment of Rs 40,000 as tax recently — *Northern India Patrika* (K. M. S. Srivastava, Gonda)

HAMIRPUR: Traffic officers on Thursday (March 13) challaned 32 vehicles including those of the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and Superintending Engineer (Public Works Department) for parking vehicles in the restricted area in front of the mini-Secretariat—*Indian Express* (Aflatoon Desai, Varanasi)

GWALIOR: Altogether, seven persons including a doctor and businessmen, have filed applications for the adoption of a male child found here recently in a temple. No one had offered to adopt a female child found in similar circumstances seven months ago. According to the Additional District Magistrate, Mr Dharmvir Singh, the applications for the adoption of the male infant were being processed to find out the most deserving person to take the child who is being looked after by the staff of Kamala Raja Hospital. Meanwhile, in the same hospital, waits the seven-month old girl for a parent—*Indian Express* (C. L. Gupta, New Delhi)

WE never encouraged it (the Assam blockade). On the other hand we opposed it. But the Chief Minister of West Bengal himself has said that it was for a just cause—Mrs Indira Gandhi

I AM appealing to the Congress (I) leaders in West Bengal who have their political axe to grind, not to indulge in this movement—Jyoti Basu

THE leaders of the Left Front see conspiracy behind everything—Ajit Panja, West Bengal Pradesh Congress (I) president

MR Jyoti Basu is very much with the conspiracy of goings-on in the north-eastern states — Subrata Mukherjee, general secretary of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress (I)

AND who is the leader of this movement? While the leaders say Mrs Gandhi is their leader, Mrs Gandhi herself speaks against the movement. This is sheer double dealing and is definitely not good—Jyoti Basu

WE do not think there can be any solution to the Assam problem through this agitation — A.B.A. Ghanl Khan, Choudhury, Union Minister for Energy and Irrigation

THE Penal Code does not distinguish between the blind and those with eyes—A police officer quoted in *New Age* after the lathi charge on blind processionists in New Delhi

THE Moghul empire has come to Delhi again. In the Moghul dynasty every offspring has done the parent some damage, one has even thrown the father in prison to rule himself—Raj Narain quoted in *Indian Express*

ALMOST four months after its landslide comeback to power Indira Gandhi's Government still has no economic policy of its own — *Far Eastern Economic Review*

HAS our Press, out of fear, already begun to censor itself?—Rahul Singh in *Business India*

I OWE nothing to the Soviets. They didn't give me as much as a pin to help in my liberation struggle—Robert Mugabe

RIVALRY among dancers has led to an over-emphasis on personal publicity...I find this the most distressing feature of today's dance scene — Yamini Krishnamurthi quoted in *Contour*

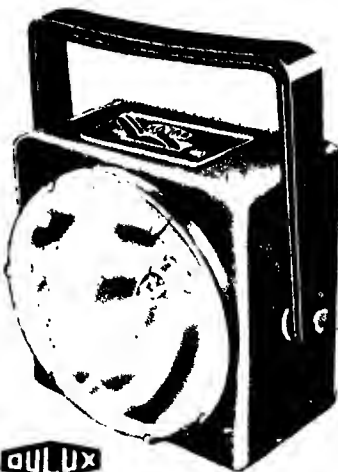
abroad

OTTAWA: Citing humanitarian and compassionate reasons the Canadian Government has given Miss Meelam Kholi, a 22-year-old blind Indian living in Edmonton (Alberta), permission to stay in Canada for a year. The Immigration Minister, Mr Lloyd Axworthy has said that he de-

cided to reverse deportation order on condition that her family take care of her. Miss Kholi, who has been in Canada on a visitor's permit since 1977, became the focus of attention when her family appealed that deportation to India would likely mean death for the blind woman — *Statesman*

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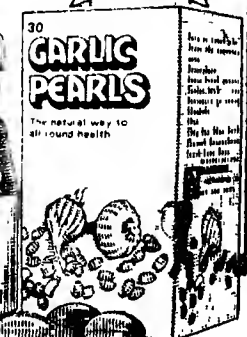
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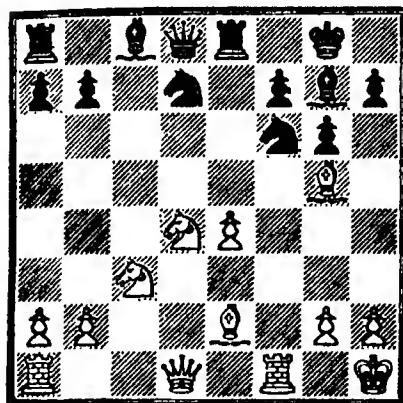


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chess

Spassky (Black)



Tal (White) to move

Position after Black's 13th move

Old Rivals

GAME OF THE MONTH for October is again taken from Montreal and features quite a battle between the two old soldiers Spassky and Tal. These two must have faced each other countless times across the chessboard in the past 20 years, but familiarity has bred little contempt. Their games are still fresh, lively and highly competitive.

In this encounter, Tal wins the opening struggle most emphatically, but Spassky fights back like a wounded lion, finding at each stage the move to give his opponent the most problems. Under such pressure many might let the win slip through their fingers: it is psychologically not easy to maintain control over a winning position when the opponent continues to create difficulties. But Tal's experience sees him through. No doubt he would have been very surprised not to encounter such strong resistance from an old rival such as Spassky.

White M. Tal. Black B. Spassky.

Montreal 1979. King's Indian Defence.

1. N-KB3, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-KN3; 3. N-B3, B-N2; 4. P-K4, P-Q3; 5. P-Q4, O-O; 6. B-K2, P-K4; 7. O-O, P x P; Normally in the King's Indian one is not advised to surrender the centre so early, but Spassky has a specific idea in mind.

8. N x P, R-K1; 9. P-B3, P-B3; And here it is. He intends to break with ... P-Q4.

10. K-R1! An excellent waiting move. After all these years, Tal can evidently read his opponent's mind like a book.

11. P-Q4; 12. B x P, P x P; 13. P x P! The weak KP means little compared with White's dynamic possibilities on the KB file.

14. N(4)-N5! Virtually deciding the game in White's favour already. The threat is N-Q6 followed by B-QB4 when Black will be trussed up like a chicken. Spassky senses the seriousness of the situation.

15. R-K4; 16. B-KB4, N x KP; 17. N x N, Q-R5; The point. He wins back a piece through the mate threat on R7.

18. P-KR3, Q x N; 19. Q-N3, N-B3; Black is beginning to co-ordinate his forces and threatens to whip up good compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

20. B-B4, Q-R5; 21. B x P+ K-R1; 22. R-B3; White's task is still not easy. On 22. QR-K1, N-K5 Black will recover his lost material.

23. B-B4; 24. N-B3, N-K5? Under-

estimating White's 25th move. He could have maintained the momentum of his counterplay with 23. ... N-R4.

24. N x N, B x N; 25. Q-B4! A powerful pin. At last White is beginning to re-establish control.

26. ... R-Q1; 27. QR-KB1, K-N2; 28. B-K6, R-Q7; 29. Q-B5! Decisive. White threatens both mate on B6 and the bishop. 30. ... B x R; 31. Q x B+, Q-B3; 32. Q x Q+, K x Q; 33. B-N4, R x QNP; 34. R x B+. Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



THE WINNER of the Bols Brilliancy Prize at Lausanne was De Falco, of Italy, for his play of this deal against Israel.

Dealer, East Game all

♠ J 5
♥ A J 10 9 6 5
♦ Q J 7 2
♣ 9

♠ A 10 6 3
♥ 7
♦ A 9 8 3
♣ 8 7 5 3

N
W E
S
♠ Q 8 4 2
♥ 4 2
♦ K 10
♣ K Q 6 4 2

♠ K 9 7
♥ K Q 8 3
♦ 6 5 4
♣ A J 10

After a pass by East, South opened One Heart and finished in Four Hearts. West led ♠ 7 to the Queen and Ace. South returned the Jack of clubs at trick two. When West did not cover, the declarer ruffed, drew trumps, and played on diamonds. Later he led the Jack of spades from dummy and East mistakenly played low. Since East had passed originally and had turned up with several good cards, South let ♠ J ride and made the contract.

Reporting the deal, Philip Alder implied that declarer's play of ♠ J at trick two was a far-sighted 'discovery play', designed to establish the lie of the club honours. But it was a natural play for other reasons.

I liked just as much another play by De Falco, which we saw on Vu-Graph:

♠ A K J
♥ Q 6 3
♦ K J 8 4
♣ K 3 2

♠ 8
♥ A K J 9 7 5 2
♦ A 6 2
♣ A 4

N
W E
S
♠ 7 2
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 7 5 3
♣ J 10 8 6 5

♠ Q 10 9 6 5 4 3
♥ 10
♦ 10 9
♣ Q 9 7

South played in Four Spades doubled after West had shown a big hand. West led ♥ K and switched to a trump. Declarer can finesse West for ♦ Q or can play him for ♠ A x, but De Falco's line was to win the second spade with the Queen, lead a diamond to the King and return a diamond to the 10 and Ace, leaving West on play.

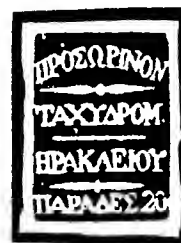
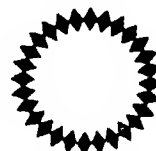
Playing in Four Spades undoubted, Nordby, of Norway, in the closed room followed exactly the same line. Quite a feast for the onlookers, as the journalists say!

TERENCE REESE

stamps



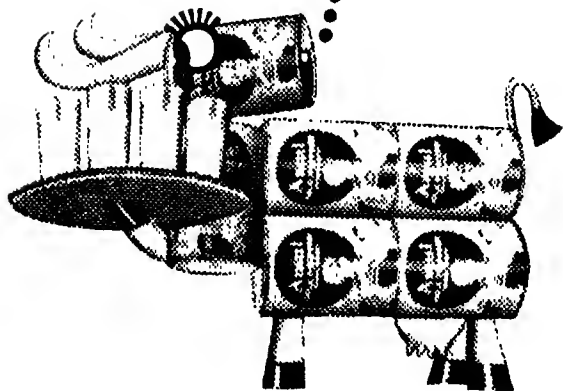
THE first stamps to have the name 'Rhodesia' incorporated in their design were issued by the British South Africa Company on 11 November 1910. Their release coincided with a visit by the Duke of Connaught, who had been in South Africa for the opening of the first parliament of the new union. The Rhodesian stamps, finely engraved by Waterlow and Sons, portrayed King George V and Queen Mary. They were in 18 values ranging from ½d to £1 but there were so many variations of shade and perforation that Stanley Gibbons's catalogue lists almost a hundred varieties. The £1 stamp is now very scarce in good condition, costing at least £400 if mint or £150 if postmarked. The stamps are known to collectors as the 'Rhodesian Double Heads'. In 1913 they were superseded by an equally long series in the normal small format with a portrait of King George V in admiral's uniform.



A MEDITERRANEAN conflict of 80 years ago is recalled by this crudely printed stamp inscribed in Greek 'Provisional Post - Heraklion: 20-paras' in 1896 the Cretans rebelled once more against their Turkish rulers. Greek troops landed on the island to suppress the rebels but Greece fared badly in the ensuing war with Turkey. The Great Powers then intervened to force both Greeks and Turks to withdraw, and Prince George of Greece was appointed high commissioner. In the British zone of occupation, centred on Heraklion, stamps were hastily produced for use on civilian mail. They were withdrawn late in 1899, when the first issues of the new government were ready for issue. The British provisional stamps are now scarce and this example realised £95 at a recent Phillips auction.

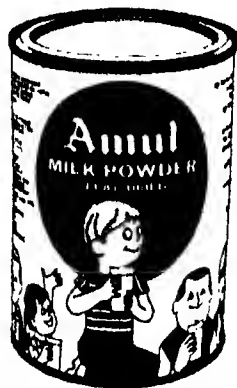
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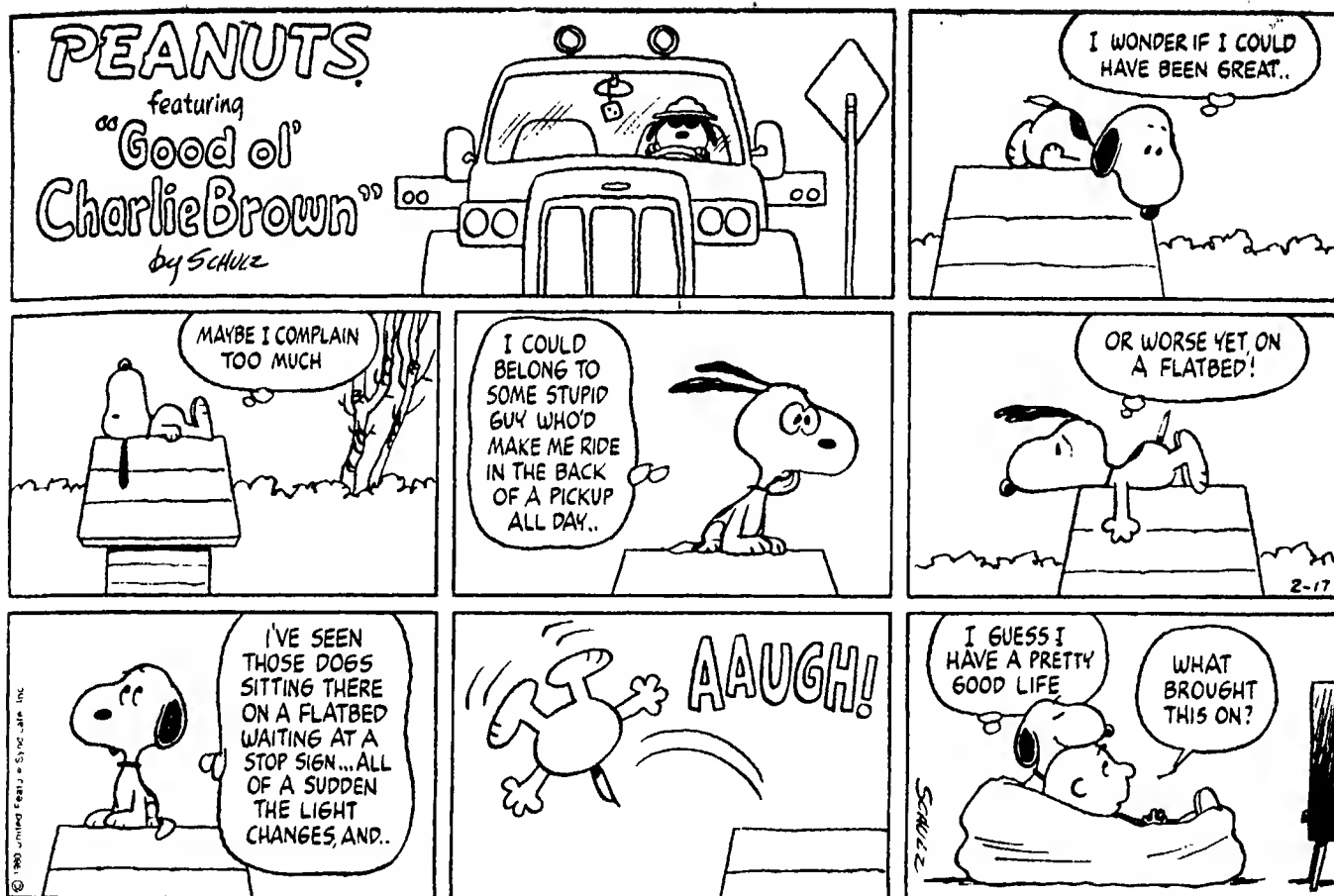
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science

Cancer-detectors

CERTAIN requirements need satisfying if we are to cure cancer. Obviously, we must be able to diagnose it, but we must also be able to follow its course. This makes it necessary to develop sensitive and accurate ways of detecting and monitoring the disease. One way this might be done is to find substances in the blood which are produced exclusively by tumours, and then develop means of measuring them in very low concentrations. Such substances are called tumour-markers and an ideal one would give a reliable guide to the number of living cancer cells in a patient.

A person who has a large tumour is likely to have a billion cancer cells in his body. Careful physical examination of the patient coupled with the use of x-rays often fails to detect a cancer the size of a pea, which would contain about 1,000 million cancer cells. The best tumour-marker now in use makes it possible to detect a tumour smaller than the size of a pin-head containing between 10,000 and

100,000 cells. This greatly improved level of detection can make an important contribution to diagnosis at an early stage of the disease.

A hormone produced by the placenta of pregnant women and first identified in 1929 still comes closest to being the ideal tumour-marker. There is an abnormally high amount of this hormone, called chorionic gonadotrophin, in the blood and urine of pregnant women, but it is almost undetectable in other normal people. Its level was, however, sometimes found to be very high in certain uncommon, abnormal pregnancies where the 'afterbirth' or placenta had changed into a tumour-like mass resembling a cluster of grapes inside the womb. This benign tumour is called a hydatidiform mole. In five to ten per cent of cases they become malignant. Cancerous ones, known as choriocarcinoma, are fatal if untreated. It was found that measuring the chorionic gonadotrophin level in the blood or urine of such patients provided a reliable guide to the state of the disease and its

response to treatment. The fact that this form of cancer is now curable in over 95 per cent of cases owes a great deal to these measurements.

There are many other substances in the blood that we can measure and use to monitor cancer. Some are released by tissues such as bone or liver after they have been invaded by the disease. So, if the blood is found to contain an unusually large amount of an enzyme normally found in the bones, it suggests that the cancer has spread to bone. This is obviously very non-specific for inflammation following an infection could also raise the levels of enzymes from bone. Occasionally, as with acid phosphatase in cancer of the prostate, an elevated enzyme can have special characteristics that improve its usefulness as a tumour-marker. Antibody-producing cells that have become cancerous may secrete abnormal antibodies, and it is easy to measure how much of them there is in the blood. They are high at the time of diagnosis and fall if the cancer responds to treatment. Research is now going on to find new tumour-markers for common cancers such as breast cancer.

CHANNA REDDY FEELS INSECURE

DURING the days when Congress (I) men all over the country were complaining of "persecution" at the hands of the Janata regime Andhra Pradesh was the only state where Mrs Gandhi's followers felt comfortable. Now, ironically, under Mrs Gandhi's rule, a large section of Congress (I) men in Andhra are feeling unsafe. The inking in the Party has taken an ugly turn and Chief Minister Channa Reddy, who does not seem to enjoy the support of too many legislators, has started a campaign against the dissident MLAs. The residences of three ruling Party MLAs were subjected to police raids in March. The three legislators are reportedly opposed to the Chief Minister. The first victim was Janardan Reddy, the MLA from Khairatabad constituency (Hyderabad city), whose room in the MLA hostel was searched in the second week of March. The house of Shiv Lal, who represents Karwan constituency, was the next target and recently another MLA from the Hyderabad city area, Surendra Rao (Jagtyal constituency), who is a former Pradesh Youth Congress president, was subjected to the same treatment. The first raid led to a walkout by ruling Party MLAs in the Andhra Vidhan Sabha in the middle of

March, but surprisingly this significant event was not mentioned in the national dailies in the capital and the news agencies too played down the news.

The campaign against the Chief Minister has been stepped up in the meantime. Three Union Ministers from Andhra Pradesh, P. V. Narasimha Rao, Shiv Shankar and P. Venkatasubbaiah, are backing the dissidents. It may be recalled that as a Parliamentary Board member, Narasimha Rao had ensured that Channa Reddy had his say regarding the selection of only three Lok Sabha candidates from Andhra Pradesh out of a total of 42. A number of charges are being levelled against the Chief Minister by his detractors. The latest relates to the inauguration of a market-complex near Hyderabad's race course at Malakpa by Channa Reddy on March 17 which was the 'Ugadi' (Telugu New Year) Day. The dissidents allege that the State Housing Board had acquired the land near the race course with the intention of setting up a housing complex for the poor, but Channa Reddy got the plan changed and preferred to set up a market-complex there instead. They allege that the shops in the new complex have been allotted to established traders only. What has provided more cannon fodder to the dissidents is the fact that the Chief Minister openly ridiculed



Ganga Reddy, the Minister for Food, Civil Supplies, and Marketing, at the inauguration function. Channa Reddy is reported to have joked about the capabilities of the Marketing Minister in the presence of others.

What has made matters worse for the Chief Minister is the fact that three of his supporters who are camping in Delhi (at the time of writing) to canvass support for him had defected from Mrs Gandhi's Party in the past. Purshottam Reddy and Sheshgiri Rao (the Pradesh Youth Congress chief during the Emergency) had defected to the Janata and then to the Congress (U) before coming back to Mrs Gandhi's fold and Govardhan Reddy had until recently been in the Congress (U). What is most interesting is that these three were at one time said to be close to Vengal Rao, the former Chief Minister. "Defectors are now in the forefront in Channa Reddy's camp", say the dissidents gleefully.

A. R. Antulay (left) at a Congress (I) Working Committee meeting with C. M. Stephen and Indira Gandhi



NEW AICC CHIEF

WHO could possibly be the next president of the All India Congress Committee (I)? The names of former AICC president, Shankar Dayal Sharma, and Mir Quasim are being mentioned through the grapevine. The AICC (I) is at present being looked after by Abdul Rahman Antulay, the all-powerful general secretary of the organisation. The extra-constitutional post of secretary-general, which was created for Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, has not made any impact on the organisation, which at present has no properly defined division of work between the office bearers. Antulay is being tipped as the next Chief Minister of Maharashtra and a new list of office bearers for the AICC (I) presidentship to a Governor's post is long overdue. Sanjay Gandhi may find a prominent position in the next secretariat of the AICC (I), it is rumoured.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

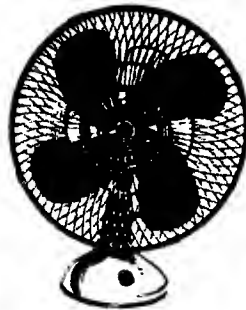
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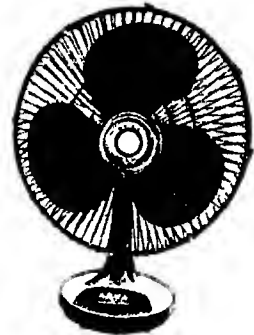
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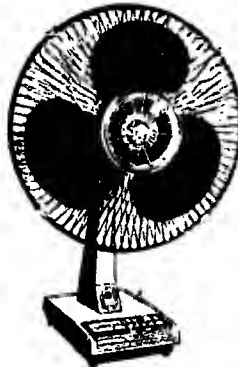
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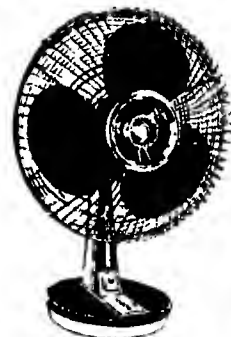
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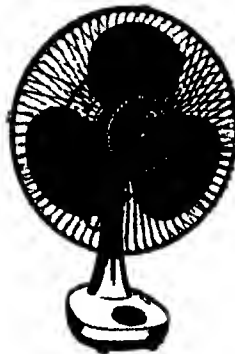
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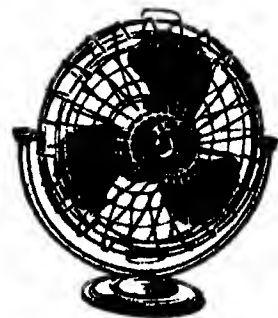
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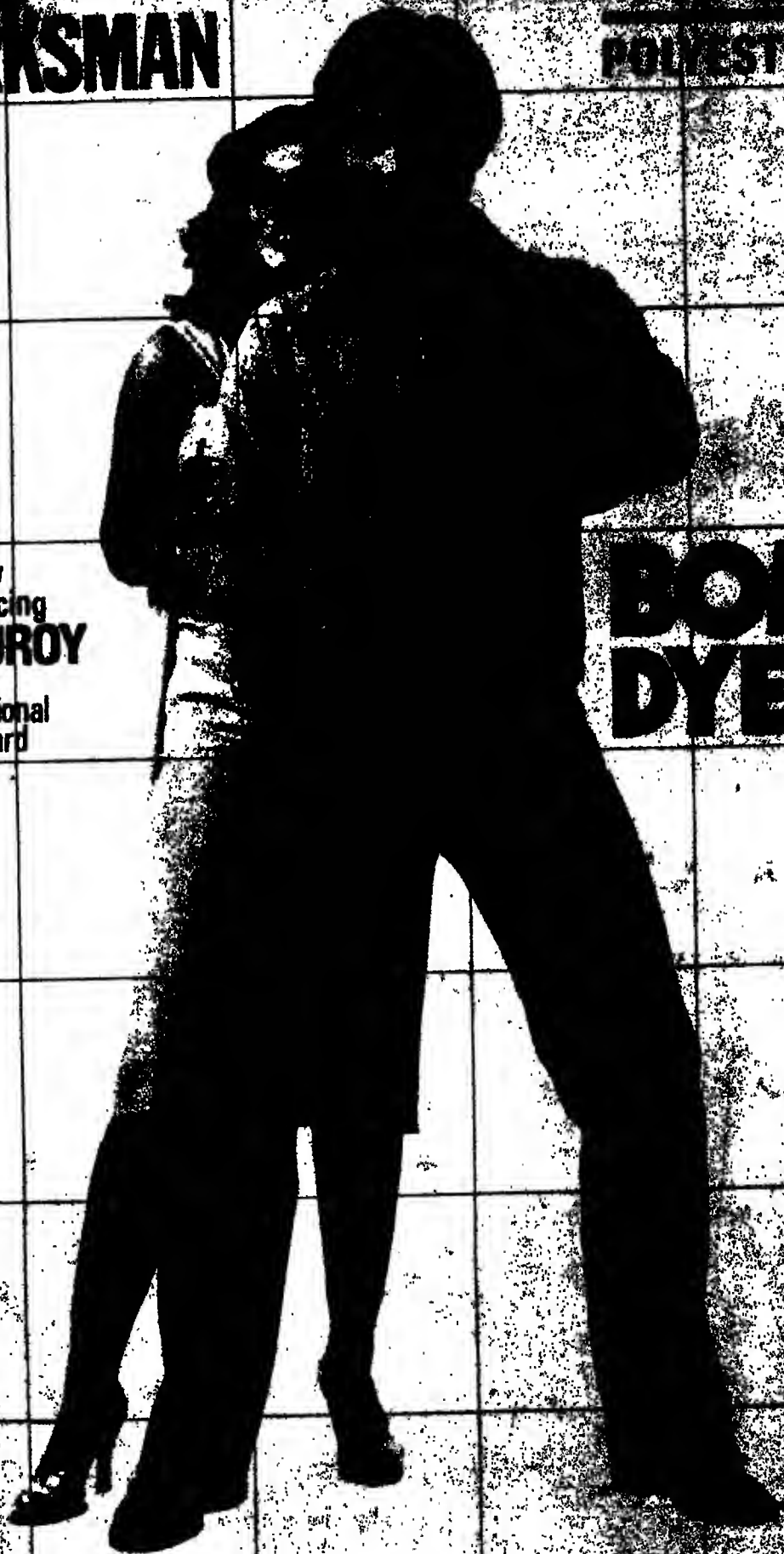
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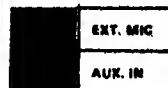


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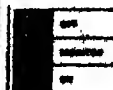
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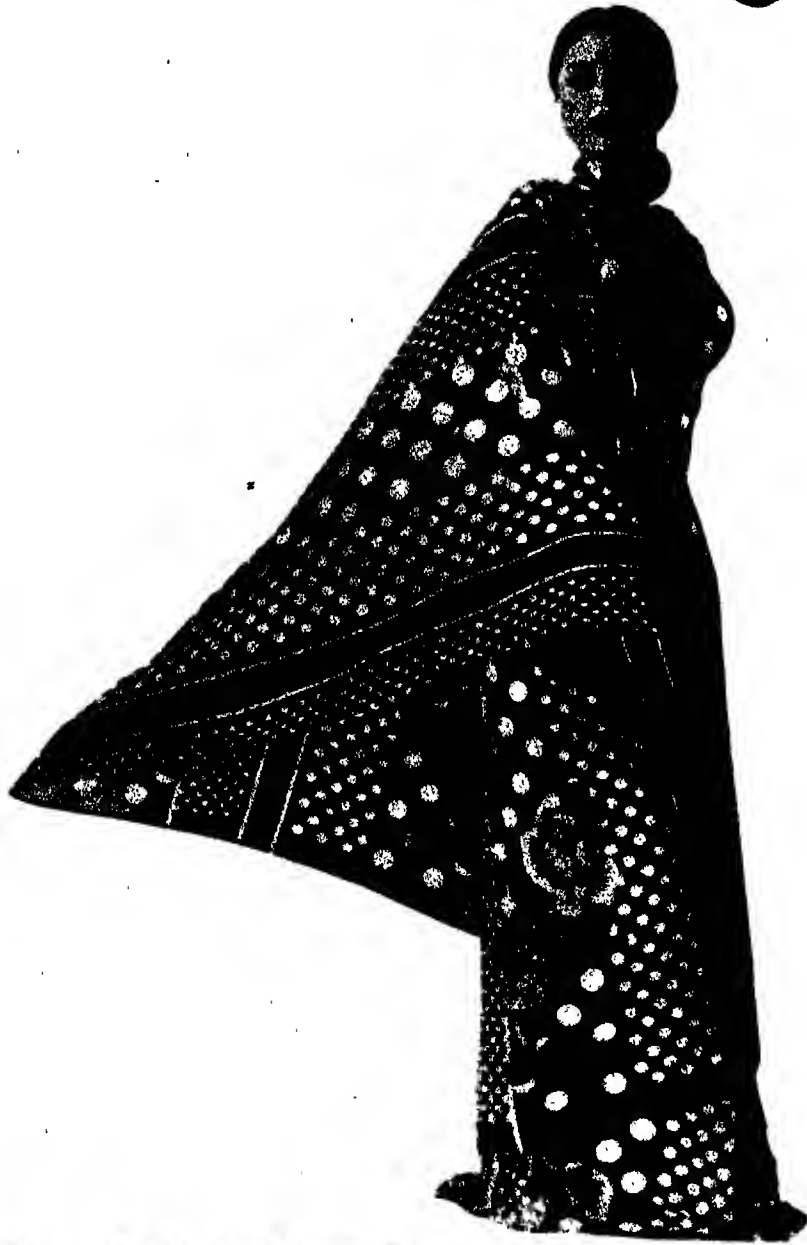
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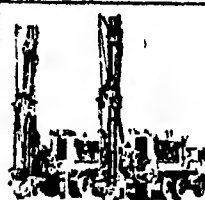
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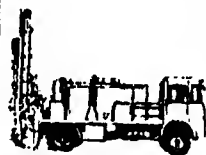
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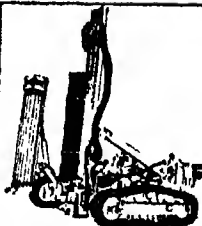
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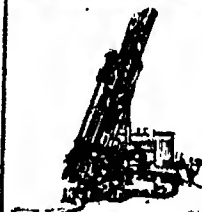
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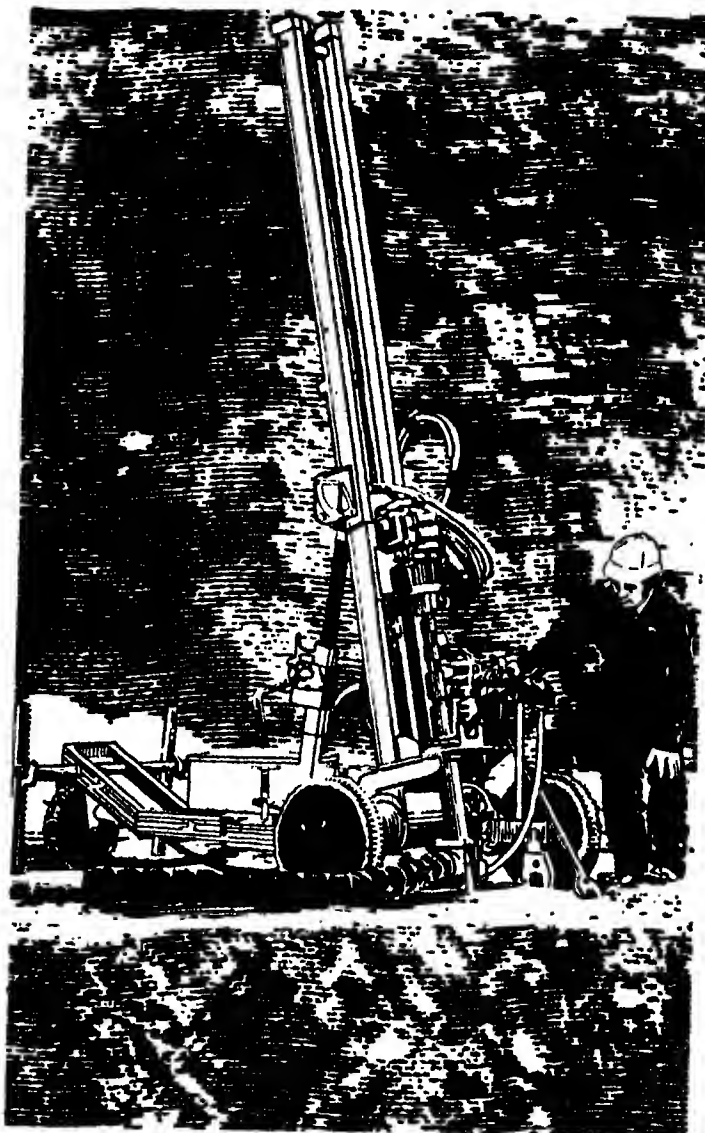
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The Janata has split a third time, thus finally ridding itself of the most painful thorn in its flesh — the RSS. The stage is now set for a coherent reorganisation of the opposition, yielding a genuine secular and socialist alternative to the Congress (I). But will the leaders sink their personal differences?

Poornima Singh, the wife of a senior Punjab police official fell to her death from the balcony of a New Delhi building. A number of Congress(I) leaders are involved in the case. One of the top politicians has even had to resign from Parliament to spare his party embarrassment.

Rajendra Jekkal murdered 10 people in a series of grisly killings. His father has disowned him; his sister last saw him in 1978 when he was in solitary confinement in Pune. But what sort of man was this, who enjoyed painting in solitude, and who was, according to his sister, a very sensitive boy?



Palamau district in Bihar is once again in the grip of an impending famine. Despite the district being declared famine-affected, the administration firmly believes that there is nothing to really worry about. However, the ravages that the successive droughts have wrought on the tribals are there to see.

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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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Problem Party

THIS refers to the cover story "Withering away of the Janata" by Kewal Varma and the interviews with Babuji and Chandrashekhar (March 16). As Chandrashekhar says, "This Party was never united..." Even when it was in power, Morarji Desai was powerless; in spite of his bold and upright stance, he was unable to cope with the problem of individual egos.

B. Venkateswaran, Goalpara, Assam

ONE of the main reasons for the Janata's success in the 1977 poll was that Babuji had joined it. Now that Babuji and his men have joined the Congress (U) this Party will become strong. A Party needs one brave leader to succeed, and Babuji fits the bill. He could easily solve the Congress (U)'s organisational and other problems. He was right in quitting the Janata, which was hardly different from the RSS.

Bipul Chanita Khound, Digboi

IT WAS not any erosion of the Congress's multi-class base that led to its split in 1967, as Kewal Varma says. Those were the days when the Congress was unrivalled, and the people at large had only one leader in view—Mrs Gandhi. It was the personality conflict and power struggle within the Party that led to its split. The 1980 Congress (I) victory was not a result of any wave like the one JP had started. The Janata debacle was a typical example of a Party being punished for irresponsible government. The Janata fooled the people for some time with its one-point programme of character assassination. If Mrs Gandhi survived, it was not because of a "floating vote".

K. Radhika, Madras

Who needs nukes?

IN his article "Only nuclear power can save India" (January 27, 1980) Bikash Sinha, with partial statistical analysis, has highlighted nuclear power as the emerging resource of the future. The public debate on the hazards of operating nuclear installations suggests otherwise. No doubt the spectre of an energy famine urges us to search for alternative sources, but the substitute must not only be adequate and economic, but also harmless. In this context we would like to point out a few interesting economic, social and environmental pros and cons of nuclear power plants.

The quantity of uranium in the world is extremely small. The technical processes related with the production and purification of fission fuel are very expensive, which is why our plant at Tarapur remains a futile venture. The fact that uranium and thorium resources might soon be depleted is a warning against depending solely on nuclear fission plants. What is worse, the major fraction of nuclear fuel stocks is reserved for bombs, not reactors. Available data may show that operating a nuclear power plant is much less damaging than most minor wars, but the danger of reactor accidents within a short time should not be judged by mere statistical averages. In fact, it is not the nuclear catastrophe so much as its origin that is a matter for debate. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission even now has not succeeded in scientifically estimating the cause of the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor accident. Besides, there have been many such accidents which were cleverly unpublicised by nuclear scientists. Scientists the world over

find it difficult to give any assurance about the safe operation of reactors in future, without hazard. The explosion of a fast-breeder reactor, which may happen any moment, would be very difficult to prevent. It is this ever-present danger of destruction that the Russians and Americans are afraid of, not machineguns or tanks.

Many non-nuclear scientists often argue that so long as we do not know of an ideal way to dispose of nuclear waste, the efforts to trap nuclear energy are suicidal. The tragedy that took place in Southern Urals (USSR) shows that the concrete capsule containing radioactive waste is impossible to destroy, and is corroded by the soil of the earth or salty water of the sea. When living beings are exposed to radiation, cells get mutated which leads to genetic imbalance. Nobody knows how to tackle the problems that arise with mutants.

The mania about nuclear energy has prevented research on other sources of power. Prof A. K. Saha in his presidential address at the Science Congress on February 1, 1980 suggested hydrogen as a future source of fuel. He dismissed nuclear energy as inconsequential and full of insurmountable hazards.

Of the three alternatives suggested, namely, solar energy, nuclear fission and nuclear fusion, Mr Sinha has not dealt with fusion. In fact, fusion has certain advantages over fission in many aspects. Products of fusion are not radioactive and hence no fatal combination of the surrounding medium is produced. Secondly, fusion fuels are available in plenty in nature. They are not only cheap, but almost inexhaustible. Hydrogen and its isotope deuterium are the most important ingredients in fusion.

Dr M. Meyyappan and S. A. Veerapandian, Thanjavur.

Course of history

THE articles on the Anglo-Indian community by David and Colin McMahon (March 16) made interesting, though sad reading to those of us concerned. What is happening to the community would appear to be the inevitable historical process taking place; only this has been greatly speeded up by the mass emigration of its members in the last two decades.

It would be interesting to know how the mixed communities of other former European colonies have fared. But as stratification into castes, communities and what have you are not so pronounced or rigid in other countries as in India, perhaps integration of the mixed population in those countries has been somewhat easier.

To speculate whether the Anglo-Indian community will be in existence 100 years from now is rather

pointless when the future of mankind itself is not assured. But just for argument's sake, one can logically assume that as the line of descent is through the male, there will be a part of the community in existence even if it has lost its recognition by then. One probable development on present trends is that with the increase in the females marrying outside the community and a decrease in the males marrying, the Anglo-Indian community (as it is currently defined) may find itself a minority within the mixed population of European-Indian admixture.

R. M. C. Mills, Calcutta

I HAD the privilege of enjoying very intimate contact with a number of Anglo-Indian gentlemen and families of Calcutta. I am convinced that they are a community bestowed with rare qualities and the city is poorer without them in their original

strength. I may mention a few illustrious Anglo-Indian officers of Calcutta Police who retired unsung, though they staked their lives on umpteen occasions for the sake of preserving peace and tranquillity in the city. One might recall Ronnie Moore, J. H. Marseiden and N. O. Knight; Mr Robinson (Jr) is still on the force. Funnily, none of these illustrious officers ever attended college. But their humane approach, professional sincerity, dedication and flair as police officers in this trouble-ridden metropolis contributed a large extent towards civic peace. During my long association with Calcutta Police for over two decades, I cannot recall a single occasion—as when the cow elephant "Phoolmala" ran amuck in the zoo, the political turmoil of 1969-72, and the World Table Tennis tournament at the Netaji Stadium, to mention a few—when Moore was not in the forefront of operations. For many major internal administrative problems Moore proved to be the only remedy. No one can deny that Calcutta's myriad traffic problems were best tackled by N. O. Knight, popular as "Ossie". In every arena, be it revelry during Christmas, New Year's eve, Durga Puja or fighting danger-

ous toughs, Moore, Knight and other Anglo-Indians gave the lead. Alas, all their good work, love and service for Calcutta went unrewarded.

In 1963, when Jack Henry Marseiden was preparing to migrate to Australia, a few other colleagues and I requested him to change his mind. He very sadly said that though he was born and brought up in this city, he was seen as an alien.
Arun Sengupta, Calcutta

OFTEN an Anglo Indian is looked down upon not for his mixed parentage or western life-style, but for other reasons. For instance, one could not help admiring the Anglo Indian pupils in school for their smartness and skill in basketball courts and on dance floors, but their conduct was sometimes shocking. They set themselves apart from members of most other communities. Very often in their company I had to be apologetic for being an Indian, and a Bengali at that. Most of them in school were fond of identifying themselves with a "superior" breed, and disowning their Indianness.

I believe if Anglo Indian males had tried hard enough, they could have found suitable employment in India.

instead of migrating to countries where they aren't exactly welcomed with open arms. Nonetheless, in spite of their angularities, the Anglo Indians are one of Calcutta's most colourful communities; with their migration, I am, like many others, missing them.

Manjira Majumdar, Calcutta

HAVING grown up in Central Calcutta among a large number of Anglo-Indians, I have found them quite friendly and sociable as neighbours—more friendly than members of my own community.

Arabinda Bose, Calcutta

WHILE your article on the Anglo Indians speaks about their agony and distress, the photographs do not.
V. V. Subramanian, New Delhi

MR McMAHON dug into the roots of the Anglo Indian tree, and tried to separate the community's female and male lineage. Till now, no community has had any female lineage. Mr McMahon does one better by inventing it. Moreover, he wants the female lineage insured—strictly below the waist at that.

B. Dnyā Shankar, Bangalore

Humour wit large

M. J. AKBAR'S Notes (March 16) referring to that well-known British asset—wit—reminds me of a character with a soapbox at Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner in London. Every speaker there carried his own soapbox in those days—the swinging Sixties, when permissive Britons watched skirts with rising hemlines, and had "chips" with everything, including fish and sex. They called him George. Sundays on end, he would give the same speech at Hyde Park, over and over again. His audience, faithful as it was, never let him change his words, and very often finished his sentences for him. During the last world war, when London was bombed, George decided to join the Navy, "to beat the hell of the enemy". But, as he put it, the "doctor at the naval medical board wouldn't have me because I had bad teeth". To this his reply was: "Doc, I am going to fight the enemy, not eat them."

G. V. Krishnan, New Delhi

I WAS surprised at Mr Akbar's jaundiced appraisal of London. Just like the European visitor in Calcutta who stands outside the Oberoi Grand and gets what he wants, Mr Akbar sought out the sex shops, nude shows and Arabs on his London trip, and got them. Yet he is convinced that the only reason why every white spat venom at him is because of the colour of his skin.

I hold no brief for the hatred against coloured people. I for one am shocked at London's moral standards, which go against my Calcutta background. However, as a student at Oxford University, I have the opportunity to visit London frequently.

I am inspired and stimulated, as never before, by its libraries, museums, theatres and music. In spite of my sari and colour, I have been welcomed into the homes of many Labour and Tory supporters alike, who treat me without prejudice. Attacks on Asians here are certainly not as brutal or frequent as the atrocities on Harijans which SUNDAY so vividly reports, week after week. The integration of coloured people in Britain is making far more progress than those of "foreigners" in Assam. In fact, the outcry against immigrants in London is very similar to the situation obtaining in Meghalaya, where fair-skinned Khasis are making things difficult for dark-skinned Bengalis. The question is economical. In the UK, certain categories of jobs are the virtual monopoly of coloured people.

Mr Akbar's depression in London is either due to his unwillingness to sample what the city has to offer, or his inability to look for features other than those he has written about.

Sreoshi Palchoudhuri, Oxford, UK.

THAT necessity could drive the British to any length is proved by the fact that they have a "flexible" constitution. As regards Mr Akbar's reference to London as "one of the world's most depressing cities", I am inclined to agree. But here's the other side of the story: a few years back an English boxwallah, on the eve of his departure from India to spend the rest of his days at Surrey, married a tribal girl, after converting her to Christianity. Asked why he took such an unearthly decision, the foreigner replied: "Well, my 35 years' stay in India has shown me that even on an empty stomach, the Indian hussy obeys her hubby."

D. L. Banik, Darrang, Assam

Red shorts

"THE Maharajah's puppeteers", in "Living" (March 16) made interesting reading. But your description of the hoarding "on Acharya Kripalani and Krishna Menon" is incorrect. Firstly, both were not wearing "red"—only Krishna Menon was. Secondly, they were not sporting underwear but shorts. Thirdly, they were not "competing against one another in a beauty contest", as you suggested, but an election from the North Bombay Parliamentary constituency.

Saraswathi Krishnan, New Delhi

Proof, please

IN "An opposition divided" (March 16) Barun Sengupta writes: "The major Left force of the country, the CPI(M), though trying to put up a bold face against Mrs Gandhi and advocating a resolute united fight against her, is also trying to buy peace with her secretly. Two of their politbureau members have met some persons close to Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay separately since the Lok Sabha polls and have pleaded peaceful coexistence." The CPI(M)'s stand for peaceful coexistence with the Congress(I) is based on sound principles, and is not a secret. Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad has already made a statement justifying the stand. But the allegation that two politbureau members have met Sanjay Gandhi's close men "secretly" is false. It is only an abortive attempt to malign the CPI(M). Mr Sengupta should substantiate his allegation.

Basudev Mohanty, Cuttack

Will the opposition rise again?

By KEWAL VARMA



Tarun Chakrabarty



Tarun Chakrabarty

THE Janata edifice lies in ruin. But can some of the debris be gathered again and a new edifice built? Hopefully, a process has begun. The original Janata was split into five Parties, Babuji's Janata, Chandrashekhar's Janata, RSS's Janata, known as the Bharatiya Janata Party, Charan Singh's Janata, known as the Lok Dal, and Raj Narain's Janata. On the day of writing this piece, at least one of these Janatas has ceased to exist: Babuji's Janata has merged with the Congress(U). This is only a small beginning of a new chapter in Indian politics. If its significance has not been properly appreciated it is because the Janata's experience has been so disgusting that most of the well-wishers of the opposition have lost hope of anything good emerging. Moreover, one small step forward was followed by two steps backward. Charan Singh threatened to snap ties with his former electoral allies, CPI and CPI(M), since he thinks there is nothing in common between Communists and kisans.

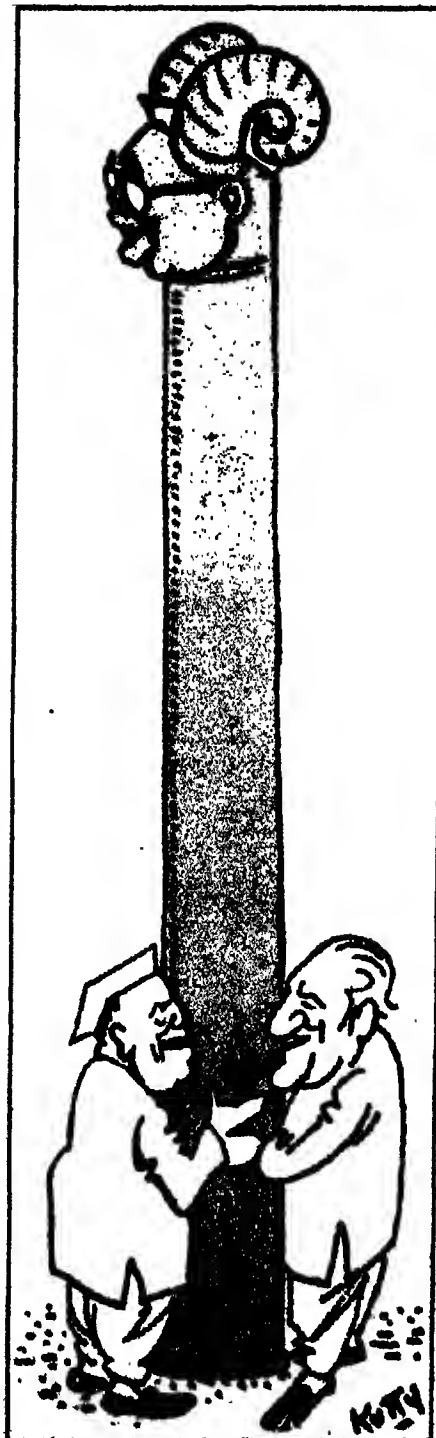
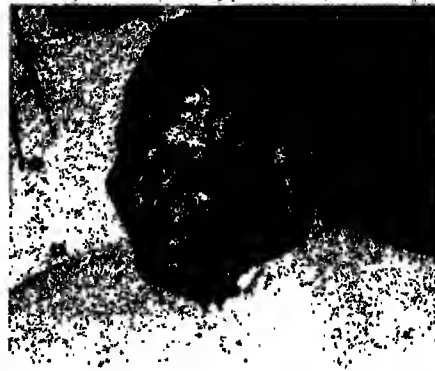
There are now six opposition groupings, four offspring of the Janatas mentioned above, the Congress (U) and Communists. Notwithstanding the motivated and sensational disclosure by comrade Promode Das Gupta of Russian and East German diplomats telling him to make up with the CPI, both the Communist Parties will swim or sink together in the present phase. The potentialities of the two Communist Parties coming together is generally underestimated. It is true that in the short run they will be playing a limited role. In the nine states where Assembly elections will be held in the next few months, Communists are not a major factor except in Bihar. But with the failure of the Janata experiment, people are getting increasingly alienated from the status quoists. They will sooner or later turn to those who stand to bring about basic structural changes in the economy and society. Therein



lies the opportunity for the Communists. In the immediate context, the two Communist Parties, which are now acting in coordination can play an important role in building the new political edifice. Chaudhury Charan Singh's efforts to ostracize Communists will not succeed.

The oddest group among the opposition is the Bhartiya Janata Party, which in effect is a front organisation of the RSS. The experience of the last three years has shown that the RSS cannot be a part of the national mainstream in normal times. Charan Singh can perhaps be accused of raking up the RSS issue to cover up his personal ambitions. But then Jagjivan Ram broke away on the same RSS issue. He was followed by Chandrashekhar, former Congressmen, except Morarji Desai and even the Swatantraite Pilou Mody. The Jana Sangh leaders, Atal Behari Vajpayee and L. K. Advani, did make feeble efforts to solve the RSS issue. But the Nagpur high command made short work of these efforts. The RSS leadership backed out of its promise to pass a resolution barring legislators from participating in its day-to-day activities. The RSS started involving itself more and more in politics. A case in point is its role in the Assam agitation. Vajpayee and Advani, lacking the courage of conviction and dependent as they are on the power base of the RSS, ultimately fell in line with Nagpur. In his presidential address at the inaugural convention of the new Party, Vajpayee did not defend the RSS. But later at a public rally, RSS sarkaryavah Prof. Rajendra Singh and Bhanrao Deoras, younger brother of RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras, came and occupied front row seats in the audience. Seeing them, Vajpayee spent exactly 30 minutes of his speech defending the RSS.

Without snapping its umbilical cord with the RSS, the Jana Sangh leadership has been making frantic efforts to break its pontifical isolation. *Organiser*, the mouthpiece of the RSS editorialised that there was much in common between the Jana Sangh and Charan Singh because the former had an RSS background and the latter an Arya Samaj background. Then when they saw Charan Singh's statement against Communists on the agency teleprinter machines, the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, without waiting for any clarification rushed in with a statement acclaiming the Chaudhury's stand. However, hard the Jana Sangh leadership may try, it will not be able to break its political isolation in the current phase. None of Charan Singh's lieutenants will support his leader if he ever tries to come to terms with the Jana Sangh. There are many well-meaning people who are unhappy with the isolation of the RSS among the opposition ranks. They feel that this disunity helps Mrs Gandhi. Perhaps, in the short run, it does. But it is time to take a medium-term view. So long as the RSS is a part of the main opposition, the minorities en bloc will remain with Mrs Gandhi. And so long as the



BATTERING RAM

minorities are with Mrs Gandhi, she is invincible in electoral politics.

From among the remaining groups, Raj Narain's Party can be written off. It is of no consequence. Manuman can only play second fiddle which he has been doing all his life. First for Dr Lohia and later for Charan Singh. The three remaining Parties, Charan Singh's Lok Dal, Chandrashekhar's Janata and the Congress (U), are engaged in behind-the-scenes talks to put up a common front together with the Communists in the coming Assembly elections. There are indeed many hurdles. The Parliamentary elections have shown that Charan Singh is the tallest personality among the opposition. He is rigid, unimaginative, unaccommodative. But people around him are well-bent to get the three Parties together. They are likely to get round the Chaudhury.

So far as the Congress (U) is concerned, what is Jagjivan Ram's influence in it? He was cut down to size in the last Parliamentary elections. Subsequently he lost further in the game of power politics by the manner in which he left the Janata Party and formed his own Party and later joined the Congress(U). Jagjivan Ram would certainly not like to have any truck with Charan Singh. But his views could be ignored by the Congress (U). In the personality-oriented politics of today, Jagjivan Ram, however, could be of use. He can even now squeeze four to five per cent votes. But he will lose his effectiveness if there is an adjustment between his Party and Charan Singh's. This is because of the incompatibility of the social support base of Jagjivan Ram, chamars, with the support base of Charan Singh. As for Charan Singh's Janata, only the Ram Dhan-Krishna Kant group may be opposed to a link-up with Jagjivan Ram. Most of the Congress (O) people and ex-PSP socialists support the move to team up with Charan

The prospects of a non-Jana Sangh opposition coming together are quite bright even in the short run. Taking a little longer term view, there is a political vacuum in the country. Mrs Gandhi's Congress will be sliding to a centrist or right-of-centre position. There is a crying need for a broad left-of-centre Party. The Communist Parties cannot exactly fulfil this role. The current churning up of the opposition Parties can throw up a nucleus for such a Party. The whole range of middle-aged leaders like Chandrashekhar, Devaraj Urs, Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes and Chandrajit Yadav are broadly on the same wavelength. If they come together and show perseverance, they can attract even persons like H. N. Bahuguna, Atal Behari Vajpayee and L. K. Advani. They will have to fight a tough battle with the older leaders, most particularly Charan Singh. The politics of opportunism has been thoroughly discredited. There is a need to give politics a principled thrust and reorient it around social groups and classes. It is to be seen whether the middle-aged leaders will rise to the occasion or not.

Born again

Former Jana Sanghs are in a revivalist mood, says AJOY BOSE



THE metal lamp which adorns the living room of Jana Sangh strongman Sundar Singh Bhandari's 11 Ashoka Road residence, has been polished and moved right below the portrait of the Sangh founding father, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. The lamp, election symbol of the old Bharatiya Jana Sangh, had been gifted to Bhandari when the Party had decided to merge with the Janata, and had ever since embellished his living room which served as the private Sangh headquarters. It was before this lamp that the men of the erstwhile Jana Sangh discussed their secret strategy during the Janata years.

At last, the veil of secrecy can be torn off now. The metal lamp can be restored to its rightful place. The 11 Ashoka Road residence can now publicly be declared as the Party office. And the rebirth of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, although now called the Bharatiya Janata Party, can be officially announced. Entering the RSS cadre-manned national convention which the Jana Sangh organised on April 5 to announce a new Party, Mr L. K. Advani was heard to remark, "ab lagti hai apna party (Now it looks like our own Party)" Mr Advani was no doubt echoing the same feeling of all old members of the Sangh.

The national convention, ostensibly of the 'real Janata Party' but actually that of the Jana Sangh, seemed like an old boys' reunion.

The rebirth of the Jana Sangh was inevitable from the day prominent leaders like L. K. Advani and Atal Behari Vajpayee were abused and threatened by angry Sangh workers in Sundar Singh Bhandari's place in February for their ambivalent atti-

tude towards the RSS. The tone of the workers' complaints and the mood of the meeting that day had clearly indicated that, for the rank and file, staying on in the Janata Party had become an unnecessary farce.

The leaders were, however, badly split over whether to remain in the Janata or not. Some hardcore RSS supporters like Sundar Singh Bhandari and Kushabhao Thakre had made up their minds, just after the mid-term poll results that there was not much point in staying on in the Janata. There were others like Nanaji Deshmukh who did not mind staying on in the Janata if the dual membership issue was not brought up. The softliners like L. K. Advani and Vajpayee were however keen to solve the dual membership issue and stay on in the Janata, free from any loyalties to the RSS. But this proved to be an impossible task. When other members of the Janata parliamentary board insisted on bringing up the dual membership issue, Advani had repeatedly requested the RSS high command to make a statement absolving the Jana Sangh leadership of having any truck with the RSS. There was a time when Balasaheb Deoras himself was in two minds whether he should actually take this step or not. But hawks like Rajendra Singh and the sharp disaffection expressed by the rank and file at the Nagpur Pratinidhi Sabha forced Balasaheb Deoras to take a tough line.

After the RSS high command turned his request down, Advani turned to Morarji Desai to find a solution. Mr Desai, having forgotten his old pledge of retirement from politics, was very keen to take a front seat in the Party's politics and made desperate efforts to rope in

support for the Sangh leaders. But Morarji Desai was never a particularly good lobbyist and could not convince even his own Congress (O) block to vote unitedly for his formula. Even socialists like Madhu Dandavate, who had earlier criticised Babu Jagjivan Ram for raising the dual membership issue, took the side of Chandrashekhar, thus defeating the Sangh in the national executive vote.

While this came as a defeat for people like Advani and Vajpayee, many in the Sangh were secretly happy that the group could now find its old moorings again. More than 80 per cent of the Sangh rank and file believe firmly in the RSS credo and the escape from the Janata strait-jacket must be a welcome development for them. According to them, the Jana Sangh had lost out in the three years they were with the Janata. Their day-to-day activities had suffered and most of their units had become paralysed. Because of the constant attack on communalism and the RSS, the Sangh workers had also lost much credibility in his traditional pockets of support. The workers, therefore, feel that the tasks of the new Party should be to go back to the old Sangh ideology and reactivate the field units. This attitude is reflected by leaders like Sundar Singh Bhandari, Nanaji Deshmukh and Kushabhao Thakre.

There is, however, a different viewpoint held by leaders like Advani and Vajpayee. Since their association with the Janata Party and because of their individual temperaments, they feel that if the new Party hoped to become a national Party they would have to move beyond the old Bharatiya Jana Sangh ideology. Both feel that the support of non-Jana Sangh opposition groups is also very necessary.

This dichotomy in the new Party was apparent during the national convention. Although the delegates who attended the convention were overwhelmingly the old RSS guard and the speeches which drew maximum response were those that called for the rebirth of the Sangh, much care was taken to try and project an image of a broad-based Party. Portraits of Jayaprakash Narayan and Mahatma Gandhi were prominently displayed beside that of Deendayal Upadhyaya. A large number of speakers were also Muslims, the most prominent among them being former Housing Minister Sikander Bakht. The appointment of Vajpayee as president and Advani as general secretary as well as the inclusion of some non-Jana Sangh leaders like Jethmalani and Shanti Bhushan, also tries to project the image of a liberal broad-based Party.

This image is, however, quite clearly skin deep for the real control of the Party would lie in the hands of men like Sundar Singh Bhandari and Nanaji Deshmukh who, although relatively in the background, actually reflect the aspirations of the Sangh workers.

Convention city

SAUMITRA BANERJEE was on the trail

WITHIN a period of one week, starting from March 30, Delhi witnessed three political conventions, representing different shades of political opinion. At one extreme was Babu Jagjivan Ram's convention which, to say the least, was ostentatious and, at the other was the organised—and well attended—Jana Sangh convention.

The first to get off the ground was Babuji's two-day meet. Massive preparations had been made and a big gathering was anticipated. Accordingly, arrangements had been made to accommodate 3,000 people. Unfortunately, for Babuji, the crowd he surveyed, perched on his red and gold chair, could not have added up to more than 400 and the rest of the pandal looked deserted. Not that any efforts had been spared to bring in the people. Rows of buses stood outside the pandal and Harijans from all over Delhi had been rounded up, with promises of food and money, to attend the convention. On March 30, when Babuji reached the Feroze Shah Kotla ground, the venue, half an hour late at 10.30 a.m. he found that the attendance was thin and decided to return to the dais later. But even when he reappeared at 11.40 a.m. he found the attendance no better.

The red and gold velvet chair itself stood out as a sore thumb against the backdrop of paintings of Ambedkar, Gandhi and Maulana Azad as a symbol of the money spent for the convention. While Babuji sat on the chair, flocked around him were Raj Mangal Pandey, Jung Bahadur Singh, Arjun Singh Bhaduria, D. N. Tiwari on the dais who spoke for a couple of minutes each and the contents of their speeches were limited to praise for Babuji.

At 6.00 p.m. sharp, Babu Jagjivan Ram got up to speak. "Mrs Gandhi's individual authoritarianism and the institutionalised authoritarianism of the RSS are equally dangerous", he said. The few people who had gathered there promptly started clapping. But he did not stop short at that. He went on to criticise the RSS for its role during the elections and said that during the elections the Congress (I) and the RSS had had a secret understanding, that even the Gujarat Janata leader, Babubhai Patel, admitted this and that later, after the elections, Balasaheb Deoras had offered all cooperation to Mrs Gandhi. Paradoxically, when one of the speakers at the convention had attacked Mrs Gandhi, Babuji had said, "No names should be mentioned". But in his own speech he touched on virtually all the problems facing the country—the turmoil in Assam, poverty, rising prices, the law and order situation, rape and the crisis in Afghanistan—and said that Mrs Gandhi would not be able to solve them.

Significantly, a resolution on organisational matters adopted at the convention authorised Jagjivan Ram to "work for and take whatever steps necessary for bringing together the people throughout the country who draw inspiration from the values and principles of the Congress culture evolved during the freedom struggle and all others who are dedicated to the ideals of secularism and democracy so as to build up a political capability to effectively check and counter the undemocratic tendencies of authoritarianism and the forces which encourage communal and caste confrontations". This was a clear sign that Babuji's Janata Party would merge with the Congress (U). At the convention the formation of the Janata(J) was formalised, and Babuji was elected its president.

THE Janata (S) convention followed close on the heels of Babuji's convention, on March 3, the day after Raj Narain was expelled from the Lok Dal. It was essentially a small gathering and had all the makings of a jamboree. People walked in and out while the delegates carried on with their speeches.

Raj Narain was his usual entertaining self. He praised Jagjivan Ram for splitting from the Janata, said that S. N. Mishra and George Fernandes would join him sooner or later and a leader is one who resigns at the right time and does not hang around when he is not wanted.

Everytime someone either arrived late or left during his speech, he would stop short and remark: "Aap bara late aaye hain," (you are very late), or "Kahan jaa rahen hai? baithiye" (where are you going? Sit down). For a time there would be absolute silence and all eyes would turn to the person whom Raj Narain was addressing. The person in question would shuffle uncomfortably, try to avoid the attention and sit down.

On the question of whether the Janata(S) symbol should be given to the Lok Dal, Raj Narain was at his best. He asked the gathering in front of him, "Kya hum log apni Janata (S) ki symbol Charan Singh ke dengey? (Shall we give our Janata (S) symbol to Charan Singh?)" The reply was spontaneous: "Nahi". That decided the issue. Came lunchtime and Raj Narain was seen sitting among a group of journalists in the middle of the lawn and eating puris and sabji. The scene could very well have passed off as that of a picnic. And many could have missed the point that the convention was called primarily to launch the new Party.

At the convention Raj Narain was made the chairman of the Janata



(Secular), and he added that the Lok Dal was the offshoot of the Janata (S) and not vice versa. Bholanath Singh was appointed general secretary.

Q STRIVE to fulfil the aspirations of JP", reads the banner at the convention of the Jana Sangh constituent of the Janata Party, held on March 5-6. But from the delegates who had gathered there, it was evident that it was back to the old Jana Sangh days. Just outside the pandal RSS literature was being sold Golwalkar's *We and Our Students*, *Organiser* and *Panchjanya*. Even inside, next to pictures of JP and Gandhi was a picture of Deendayal Upadhyaya. The day before the convention began, L. K. Advani at a Press conference had declared, "I am proud of my RSS connections". But the speakers tried to portray a different picture, which was itself contradictory. Ram Jethmalani and Shanti Bhushan said that though they were not part of the RSS and the Jana Sangh they believed that this was the only constituent of the Janata Party (they would call it the next day the Bhartiya Janata Party) that would be able to solve the problems of the people.

A resolution adopted that day reads: "(The Janata Party) reiterates the convention's commitment to the basic ideals for which Jayaprakash Narayan had launched the Party and requests all Party members to rededicate themselves to the cause and to forge an appropriate instrument for the achievement of that great purpose". But the next day, at the Ram-lila grounds where the Bhartiya Janata Party was born, it was clear that even the Party's announced adherence to JP's ideas were not looked upon favourably by a section of the delegates. A number of delegates, mostly from Maharashtra, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh expressed their disappointment at this announcement. Again a large number of delegates were disappointed that the Party was not called the Jana Sangh but the Bhartiya Janata Party. Some of those who had sent in their suggestions for the Party's name, symbol and flag had mentioned Bhartiya Jana Sangh as the name of the Party, the lamp as the symbol and a saffron flag. As a matter of fact when the seven-member committee set up to decide the symbol and the flag decided on saffron and green as the colour of the flag, some delegates shouted that the flag should be saffron all over.

Again all speakers praised the RSS, its discipline, patriotism and performance in the field of social work. The mood of the delegates was aptly summed up by a woman delegate from Maharashtra who described how she was feeling after "suffering three years of continued suffocation in the Janata Party". At the convention Atal Behari Vajpayee was elected the President of the Bhartiya Janata Party. But it is felt that the Party may soon change its name. It might well be called the Bhartiya Jana Sangh after the Assembly elections.

"They were afraid of us"

L.K. Advani tells AJOY BOSE why the Janata broke up

Q Would you describe the Jana Sangh constituent spitting from the Janata Party and forming a new Party as the rebirth of the old Bharatiya Jana Sangh?

A: No. The old Jana Sangh Party was an ideological Party. The basis of the new Party will still be the real concept behind the Janata Party as it was envisaged by Jayaprakash Narayan. And this concept was an aggregative one based on a consensus.

Q: But the aggregative nature of the Janata Party was essential because there were four different political Parties which sought to merge their identities into one Party. Now, the Jana Sangh is overwhelmingly predominant in the new Party. How can it still be like the old Janata Party?

A: The first objective of the Janata Party had been to fight authoritarianism. That it did after it won in the March, 1977 elections. The second objective was to be a national alternative to the Congress. The endeavour of our new Party is still the same, and such a national Party can be built up only through an aggregative consensus and not through a single ideological group.

Q: In spite of the Jana Sangh being so overwhelmingly predominant?

A: Without meaning to be arrogant, I would like to point out that we were also predominant in the old Janata Party. It's just that we chose to be polite and restrained, ourselves.

Q: How do you then explain that the Janata Party has split thrice in less than a year and every time on the issue of the relationship between the Jana Sangh and the RSS?

A: It's just because we were so

strong. I asked George (Fernandes) many times why this RSS issue came up again and again. And he said it wasn't the RSS but the Jana Sangh that was the issue. You see these people were publicly concerned only about the RSS connection but privately what they were actually worried about was the Jana Sangh.

Q: Why do you think they were worried so much? Why is it that the Janata had split again and again till you were left with only the former Jana Sangh constituent?

A: I told you before, they were afraid of us because we were so strong. We had to constantly exercise restraint. We had to tell all our units not to be active. For, if there was any activity by workers, it would be construed by these groups as a show of strength. Our units were paralysed. There was no activity. For any activity would show the strength of the RSS.

Q: There was a lot of criticism of you and other leaders of the Jana Sangh constituent by your workers that you had tried to dilute their ideology and were apologetic about your relationship with the RSS.

A: Yes, there was criticism. But I don't think what we did was wrong. Our political opponents attacked us by creating a bogey. It we did not restrain our workers, they would have a plausible reason to attack us.

Q: Coming to the question of your relationship with the RSS, you had earlier said that the new Party would try to be the national alternative to Mrs Gandhi's Congress. How will you reconcile this position with recent statements by RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras about giving support to Mrs Gandhi?

A: This is the trouble. Why doesn't SUNDAY bother to publish the true statements of Balasaheb. If you take the trouble to go through the actual statements of Balasaheb there is no mention at all of giving political support to her. It is true that I made a public declaration saying that I disagreed with what Balasaheb said. But that was because I was misled by the newspaper report. In any case in principle I can always disagree. The RSS has no political control.

Q: I believe some leaders of the Jana Sangh constituent have met Chaudhury Charan Singh recently. Will your new Party have an electoral alliance with the Lok Dal for the coming Assembly elections?

A: It is too early to definitely commit myself. But we have no objection in principle to have such an alliance.



Premier Mugabe's task ahead



Lord Soames

REETA DUTTA GUPTA reports from Zambia

under Sithole; African National Congress under Muzorewa and the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe—PROLIZI—under James Chikerema) was shortlived. Widespread inter-faction fighting and tribal wrangling and killing led to the arrest of several ZANU members in Zambia including the Late Josiah Tongogara the "warlord" of Mugabe's force ZANLA (Zimbabwe African Liberation Army). It was around this time that Mugabe broke away from the original ZANU and formed his own ZANU based in Dar-es-Salaam from where he accused the Zambian Government of detaining his men. These men were later released and he moved from Dar-es-Salaam to Maputo in Mozambique from where he led his bush war.

Mugabe has proved to be the chosen leader, uniting and breaking away at the most opportune moments and thereby averting a tussle for



Premier Mugabe

IN Zambia, the failure of ZAPU chief Joshua Nkomo, 62, to capture an absolute majority after 30 years of struggle threw a damper on liberation jubilation. Nkomo's Party fought the guerrilla war from Zambian soil and Zambia had been most vitally affected economically due to the sanctions against white Rhodesia. In the last three years the price of essential commodities went up by 150 per cent; bridges, roads and railway bridges were blown up in retaliation by enemy commando units. The air in Zimbabwe House in Lusaka, the headquarters and wartime nerve centre of ZANU activities, seemed subdued. School children and even house boys expressed regret. "We wanted Nkomo to win. Mugabe is a Marxist. He once even fought with our President". Though victory celebrations in Zambia did not compensate the damage and deprivation suffered during the war, officials bravely maintained: "The country's support for the liberation of Zimbabwe was not based on individuals but on the principle of genuine majority rule."

Robert Mugabe, the fine orator and the most qualified African leader (BA, BED, BSc, LLB, and BA Admin) broke away from the three-year alliance to fight the election on a separate ticket. The alliance from the beginning had been a shaky one. The nationalistic struggle which began in the early Sixties had been weakened by a divided approach and leadership dispute. The 1974 Lusaka Accord for the merger of the four nationalist Parties (ZAPU under Nkomo; ZANU



leadership. Yet it must be acknowledged that the PF alliance was responsible for moving the British and Ian Smith to go for the Lancaster conference. Using the usual hit-and-run tactics, over 50,000 guerrillas (their number had been kept secret) had fought the war against an 87,000 strong Rhodesian force equipped with sophisticated weapons and also Napalm and phosphorous grenades which were condemned internationally. To counteract the nationalist struggle, white Rhodesia had the largest number of civilians (over 100,000) including women under arms. On Government side there were six uniformed separate forces which included the Bishop's auxiliary force, the Pfumo Revanhu (spear of the people) and the Ziaco Revanhu (the eyes of the people) composed of children who acted as informers. According to a report of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 20,000 lives have been lost in the war of liberation. The number of war deaths figured over 1,000 a month on an average.

Says one freedom fighter: "The anti-PF posture of the British was evident during the pre-election scene. They tried their utmost to keep us at bay. The Governor's office attributed most of the acts of intimidation to us. Comrade Enos Nkala, who has been appointed Minister of Finance, was even banned by the Government from campaigning and therefore failed to get a seat in Parliament. The Rhodesian security forces were deployed to patrol the border with Mozambique and take law and order in-



Guerillas lunch in the bush

to their hands while we were treated as sinners. But in reality two attempts had been made on the life of Mugabe. Several guerrillas of Nkomo's ZIPRA (Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army) had been killed by the Rhodesian unit, even after the cease-fire. "The PF guerrillas who assembled at 16 meeting points after the ceasefire which began on December 28 to prepare for the election, had fought mostly with small arms like 60 mm mortar, rocket rifles, hand grenades and sten guns. About 10,000 to 20,000 fighters (a quarter being women) were trained every year in socialist countries and substantially aided by the Frontline States, China, Rumania and Yugoslavia.

WE'VE lost. No more future for us in a country we have built, was the general reaction of Europeans in southern Africa to the nationalist victory in Zimbabwe. Woman wearing T-shirts which say "Rhodesia is superb" are no longer in a mood to stay on. Said one ruefully: "Rhodesia is one of the few developed countries in this region. Now wait and see how the economy of the country will collapse. Despite the war, things were still cheap and everything you wanted was always available. There were no shortages of essential commodities as experienced in Zambia which was quite remarkable". Says a black Rhodesian: "Ah! Zimbabwe-Rhodesia has been a superb country north of South Africa. True racial discrimination was there but there isn't a country as developed as ours". While an Afrikaaner says, "Now Zimbabwe is over. All eyes will be turned on South West Africa. Then it will be South Africa. We had better go liberal. Looks like our days are getting numbered."

Reports from all over Zimbabwe say that business is booming. Household removal firms and secondhand furniture dealers are cashing in heavily as the exodus of whites figures at well over 1000 a month. *The Standard Bank Economic Bulletin* published monthly in Salisbury estimated a net loss of 15,000 to

20,000 whites in 1979. The Scorpion Society in London which helps refugees to settle in Britain is getting more than 100 letters a day. South Africa and Australia have been receiving over 300 immigration applications daily. For the whites there is no alternative to massive Africanisation of jobs in the public sector. Whites must now make room for the young blacks. Many Europeans who were prepared to live under black rule and privately favoured Nkomo (though his Party's shooting down of a civilian plane has been hard to swallow) to the Marxist hardliner Mugabe, have been mortified and shocked.

The white exodus is likely to start off the trend so typical in newly independent African countries. As more and more skilled personnel leave, the accounting, engineering, medical and teaching professions will try to fill the vacuum by recruiting staff abroad on a contract basis which



offered attractive benefits and inflated salaries. The war-torn country, high up in debt and a military budget of 402 Rhodesian dollar last year, can ill afford expensive changes. Robert Mugabe's reconciliatory gesture towards the 200,000 white community and even racist Pretoria; his recognition of the substantial British element in the country and repeated reassurance to the Europeans can rightly be seen as a wise and Solomonic step towards unification and consolidation. Contrary to his earlier statements on nationalisation of industries, Mugabe has opted for private enterprise, socialism rather than Marxism. Two whites, David Smith, former Minister of Finance and Dennis Norman, president of the Commercial Farmer's Union have been taken into the Cabinet as Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Agriculture respectively. Joshua Nkomo "father of Zimbabwe" has been given Home Affairs. Says a southern Africa watcher: "The whites have been done for ever. In the future, opposition is to be expected from dissident Africans. Mugabe who got over 60 per cent of the votes for the 80 seats from the Shona tribal area in the east, got only one seat in the west where Ndebeles are predominant. By taking members from other Parties in his Cabinet in spite of an absolute majority, Mugabe has eschewed factionalism and proved his superior political ability".

Currently the country is faced with numerous problems: high rate of black unemployment, inequitable distribution of land in favour of the whites (6,000 white farmers own a major portion of the land and a large percentage of which is underutilized); widespread starvation among the rural poor, illiteracy among the blacks (475,000 dropped school during the war), diseases and abandoned and orphaned children. In a population of seven million people one black in every 5 is unemployed. The university of Rhodesia's datum line study published last year, states that 80 per cent of blacks receive wages below the minimum income requirement. Besides, there is a big disparity in the wages of the two races for the same job. White Rhodesia, once the country with superb medical infrastructure, (85 per cent were vaccinated during peace time) is now rife with malaria, scabies, measles and the African killer disease—Kwashiorkar (malnutrition).

Among the priorities outlined by the new Government in moving the war-beleaguered country to peace are restoring normality by abolition of martial law (seventh extension of martial law had been made since the original promulgation on September 10, 1979) and the law courts, resettlement of refugees (the war sent more than 225,000 in the Frontline states who are now returning), integration of the forces that have been loyal to different leaders into a national army ending racial wage discrimination and expanding education and health services to every corner of the country.

Left Mrs Gandhi's main target

WILL the Leftists of the country come closer? Can there be unity between the two major communist Parties of India? And, should we expect the united Left to play a significant role in national politics in the near future?

These questions are especially important now because of the following reasons. First of all, the bourgeois opposition Parties are breaking up. Second, the Leftists are the ruling force in three states of India. These are the only non-Congress (I) Governments still surviving in the country. Thirdly, some of the leaders of the CPI and CPI(M) are frantically trying to forge a Left unity. Some Congress (U) leaders are also interested in a broad-based Left and progressive platform. Fourthly, the Russians are also showing a keen interest in the formation of a Left alliance in India.

It is true that the bourgeois opposition Parties are breaking up. It is also true that this will create a vacuum in the political arena of the country. But will the Left Parties be able to fill this vacuum? Or will the vacuum remain till the bourgeois opposition forces can regroup themselves?

I personally think that it will be very difficult for the Left forces of the country to fill the vacuum in the near future even in alliance with the Congress (U). In the Hindi-speaking area, the heartland of India, the Leftists are still not a force. The CPI has some influence in Bihar, but there too they need the help and assistance of some other bourgeois Party to make their presence felt significantly. However, even an alliance of the Congress (U) with all the Left forces of the state will not make much headway now.

In UP, MP, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab the Leftists and the Congress (U) have no mass following. In the remote villages of the Hindi-speaking states, communists are still avoided like the plague. In these circumstances, will it be possible for the Leftist Parties to make much headway in the heartland of India within the next four or five years? By that time, will not one or the other bourgeois Party become the main opposition force again?

The Leftists of course, will come closer in order to save their Governments in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. But if Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay decide to pull down these Governments can the combined Left force save them? I don't think they can. They can create some difficulties in the states and Parliament for some time — but that is all. It will be a very short-lived resistance. After all, how far did the CPI(M) resist Mrs Gandhi during the Emergency?

Power and Politics



By BARUN SENGUPTA

No doubt, some of the leaders of the two Communist Parties are keen to come closer. They are even talking of an ultimate unification of both Communist Parties. But there are also influential leaders and groups in both Parties who are opposed to this idea. The majority of the CPI(M) leaders of West Bengal are bitterly opposed to the suggestion of admitting the CPI in the Left Front of the state.

The Russians are keen on a broad-based Left alliance and unification of the two Communist Parties of India for quite different reasons. From what Dr Yurolov (a high official of the India Cell of the Central Committee of the CPSU) and Mr Yakumin (second in rank of the Soviet Embassy of Delhi) told some Leftist leaders in Calcutta recently, it is apparent that the Russians do not want the Left alliance to move towards a head-on clash with Mrs Gandhi immediately. They would prefer the Left alliance to work as a pressure group in India, at least for the mo-

Promode Dasgupta chairman of Left Front Committee in West Bengal



ment. They know that the CPI-CPI(M) combine will provide the leaders of this Left alliance. There are some important pro-Moscow elements in the leadership of the Congress (U) also. All these men together can maintain constant pressure on Mrs Gandhi so that she cannot go closer to USA and China on the "advice and pressure of her son". The Russians are more afraid of Sanjay Gandhi than Mrs Gandhi.

These two high-ranking Russians also suggested to some of the Leftist leaders of Calcutta that they should not go for an all-out alliance against Mrs Gandhi. They warned them that it could hasten the growth of fascist force in India as it did in Germany once. Rather, the Russians suggested that the Leftists try to cooperate with Congress (I) in some fields such as the fight against the communal forces. They said this may build up a bridge between the Congress (I) and the Leftists and may ultimately save three Left Governments of the country. The Russians are more interested now in stopping India from going closer to the USA and China than anything else.

It is true that if the Russians can guarantee the safety of the three Left state Governments of India the Leftist Parties of the country (at least the leaders of the Left Parties) would not mind keeping their eyes closed to what Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay do in the rest of the country. But the 64,000 dollar question is will the Russians be able to save these state Governments? I am afraid, even if they dare to propose such a thing to Mrs Gandhi, they will not succeed.

And once Mrs Gandhi pulls down any of these state Governments no amount of persuasion will stop a head-on collision between a majority of the Left forces of the country and Mrs Gandhi. A majority of the Left forces will then join hands with all other anti-Mrs Gandhi forces of the country — Right or Left. It will then be the pre-1977 situation again.

Mrs Gandhi also cannot allow the Left of the country to survive. Her traditional base is the poorer sections of the people (except in West Bengal and in Kerala). If the Left can make any headway in other parts of the country they will first take away the poorer sections of people from Mrs Gandhi's influence. That will shake the political foundations of the Nehru family. So Mrs Gandhi cannot afford to allow the Left to make any headway in other parts of the country. She would prefer to demolish the Leftist strongholds before they can expand to other areas. And this, I am afraid, she will start doing within the next 12 months.

Mrs Gandhi's comeback and Sanjay Gandhi's reemergence will hit the Leftists more than the Rightists in the country.

*Idi nahu kira, bhatya
Pisi nahu kira
Hai rey, raji kira
So dehecha kera
Ma dagi khatera
Komor adha huriya
Hai rey, raji kira
Bhu eran keraan.*

BROTHER, there was a famine last year. There is one this year too. When will it end? The mahua fruit has started falling and the kolnari saag has sprouted. For a few days, we will forget the famine.

So run the plaintive words of an Oraon song which can be heard in the districts of Palamau and Hazaribagh in Bihar. The song, alas, is rather optimistic: reality is more harsh. Mahua, which a staple food of the tribals at this time of the year, is fast disappearing while the kolnari leaf (a spinach) is yet to be seen. Result: Palamau and Hazaribagh districts are slowly inching towards famine, perhaps far worse than the historic 1967 famine and definitely more widespread. To compound matters there has been little or no rain in the past months.

It is only March. The summer has yet to display its fury but already the fields are without water. The

SPECIAL REPORT

Koel river which flows through the district is now a vast stretch of sand. Perennial rivers, streams, waterholes and wells contain very little water, often none at all. The hard rocky soil which is so difficult to cultivate is parched and dry. Cultivation has yielded no results and farmers have watched the outcome with dismay. What one finds in the fields now are withered stalks of arhar (a type of pulse). Still other farmers have not given up hope. In sheer desperation they have planted thorny prickly pear bushes which produce yellow flowers and seeds for burning.

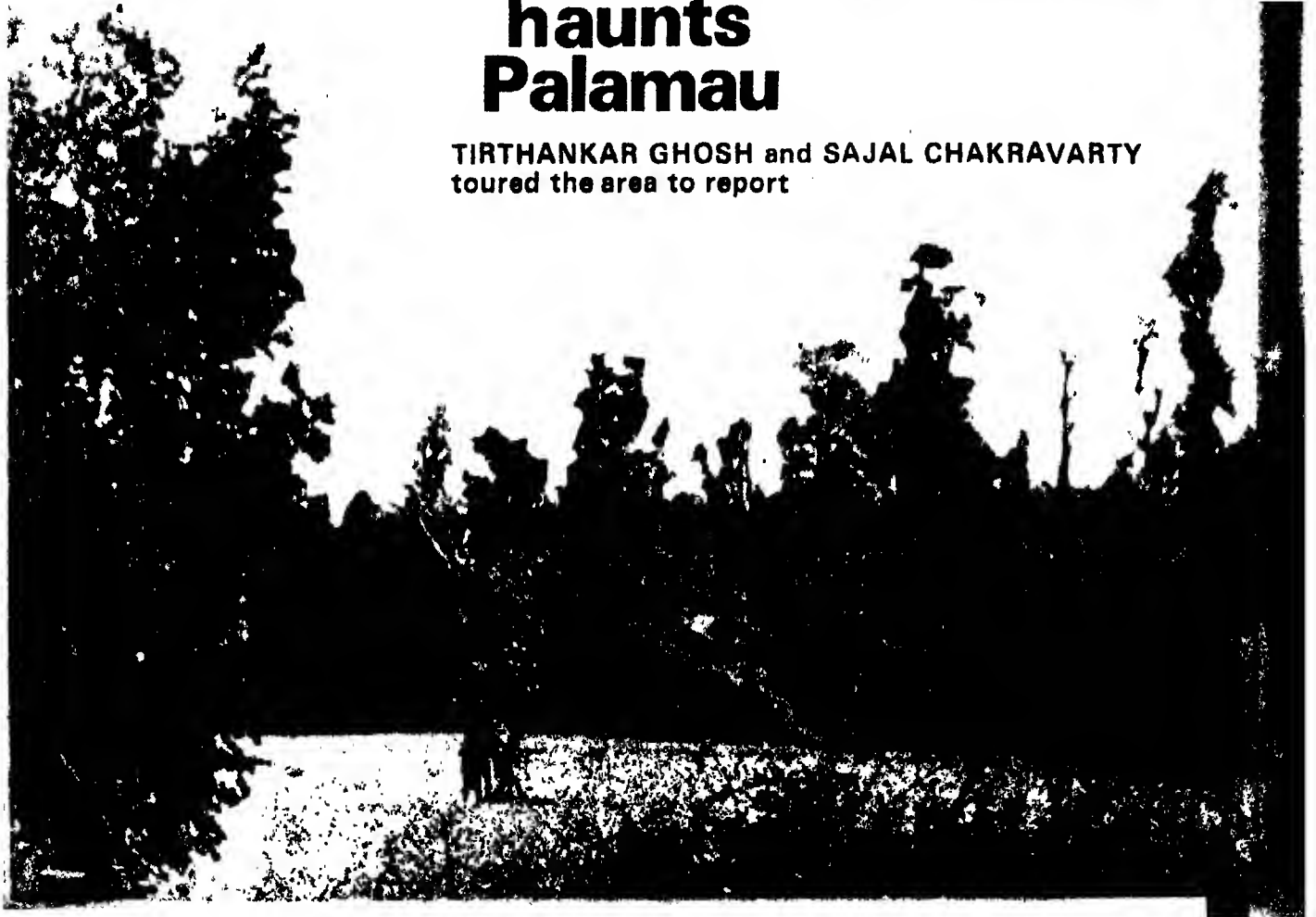
Except for the very rich, ordinary farmers have already eaten into their reserves—the paddy or wheat they stored for seeds has been consumed by hungry families. With no other alternative, they have been eating whatever they can lay their hands on. Said Basu, a middle-aged mother of three young children in Chipadahor, "I go out to the forest early in the morning to gather what I find—leaves, berries or roots. There are seven of us in the family and often I don't even cook once in the day. The children cry all the time. What can I do?" We found her waiting with her

husband at around two in the afternoon for a week's food ration at a distribution centre of the food-for-work programme run by one of the relief agencies. Along with the couple there were nearly a hundred others. Fatigue was writ large on their faces as some of them had been waiting from nine in the morning. Someone had told them that the ration trucks would be arriving that day and they had arrived in throngs, with hope in their hearts, to collect their dues.

The people are at the end of their tether. All they want is jobs which will in turn bring them something to eat. Thus the only solution is working in the forests or participating in the food-for-work programmes. Villagers often go out at three in the morning, work throughout the day and return at around eight in the evening. If they have some food at home they eat it, if they have none they retire to bed after a drink of water, only to repeat the routine the next day. Work sites are sometimes as far away as 30 km. They undergo this hardship in spite of the fact that most of them own land—often nine to ten acres. Their solvency, therefore, exists only in theory for most of the land is what is generally termed Tanr (land which is not very fertile and therefore difficult to cultivate. Very few people own the fertile land that is known as Don. It is a heartbreaking task to attempt cultivation of the red volcanic soil of the region, which produces virtually nothing.

Famine haunts Palamau

TIRTHANKAR GHOSH and SAJAL CHAKRAVARTY
toured the area to report



If the people are in a terrible condition, the cattle are no better off. Most animals in the area no longer graze in herds. They move about from forest to forest in search of food and water. In Nagar Untari, we saw cattle which had moved about from one watering place to another without finding a single drop. One cow just fell dead in its tracks due to thirst.

"It is not bad", said Dr Kumar Suresh Singh, the Commissioner of the South Chotanagpur division. He has his reasons. He is considered an expert on famine, having written an authoritative treatise on the Bihar famine of 1967. According to him the rabi crop was expected to produce more. The rabi area in Palamau is incidentally 20 per cent of the total crop area but it also accounts for 50 per cent of the total cultivable area. The 1967 famine occurred due to a scarcity of rainfall in 1965 followed by a drought in 1966. It is not without cause, therefore, that the Government expects nearly 1,20,000 tons as the rabi crop.

Palamau district, covering an area of 12,677 sq kms, with a population of 15,04,350 (according to the 1971 census) had four years of normal rainfall prior to 1979. After the years of plenty came the drought of 1979, leaving burnt out kharif crops in its wake. In May 1979 rainfall in various areas of Palamau ranged from five to 59 mm. The monsoon was delayed, and even then there was little relief. The Hathia rains (the last rains of the year) brought some relief on September 26 and 27. The area thus created rainfall records. Ranchi experienced the lowest rainfall since 1971, Singhbhum district the lowest since 1956 and Palamau the lowest since 1967.

Crop damage was extensive. According to a survey prepared by AVARD, an independent voluntary relief agency from Patna, the entire north-western Palamau district was affected by severe drought which resulted in a 90 per cent crop damage. Dr Singh maintains that this time too there is certainly a most severe scarcity. He toured the area extensively for around 100 days to assess the situation carefully. According to him, the people needed relief so the Government had allotted 2,038 food-for-work schemes to that district, utilising 13,77,613 mandays in which 6,660 metric tonnes of foodgrain would be distributed.

Unlike the situation in the past famine, the turnout of labourers for these schemes has been very poor. This is one of the main reasons for



Digging a well

the Government's theory that there was nothing alarming about the situation. Food prices have not increased as much as they did last time. In 1967 prices registered an increase from 100 to 300 per cent. This time they have gone up from 22 to 55 per cent. Further, the people do not look famished. "Last time they looked like walking skeletons", said Dr Singh. Only a few high officials in Ranchi are very worried about the situation. And their sense of urgency has not percolated down to the officials of Palamau's district town of Daltonganj. This was certainly the impression that one got after visiting officials there. Voluntary relief agencies have moved about from office to office to mobilise help for the movement of foodgrain. But all their efforts have come to naught. We know of two such cases. A director of a voluntary relief agency wanted diesel to transport his foodgrain. He moved about from office to office in Daltonganj and eventually had to go to Ranchi to move higher officials. Another person had to go to Aurangabad for petrol, having got nothing from Patna.

THE complacent attitude of the district officials has meant more hardship for the poor tribals. Feudalism is still rampant in the outlying areas. In Garwa, for example we met Jageshwar Korwa. His was a face that betrayed traces of fear and he looked humiliated and lost. He was a labourer for Munshi Mahato, the village landlord. Jageshwar had refused to work for him and

had gone instead to one of the food-for-work schemes. But things did not turn out as expected since he had literally been bought over by his landlord. In the evening when Jageshwar was returning from work, he was caught by the landlord's men, trussed up and beaten with shoes. His wife intervened and she too was beaten up. Then there was Prasen Korwa from Bandua village near Garwa. He had made the initial mistake of taking four paseri rice (around 12 kgs) from the sarpanch, Shiydutt Mahato, in 1971. The value at that time was Rs 20. But the interest on his debt started multiplying. He has already given the landlord two goats worth Rs 150, a bullock worth Rs 170 and around 12 kgs of pulses costing Rs 16. In addition Prasen Korwa had worked without pay for 15 days and returned Rs 150 in cash. But the sarpanch is still not satisfied. Since that fateful day in 1971 Prasen Korwa works on Mahato's fields with only a meal a day. He has a number of mouths to feed at home but for all the landlord cares they can remain hungry. And there are many more such cases.

The tribal's life has been one of total oppression. He cleared the forests for agriculture only to see the same land taken away by unscrupulous landlords. He then went further into the highlands to utilise the land there, but once again he was thwarted and even those lands were taken away. The tribal is basically a proud man, a fearless man but he is a man who does not know how to assert his rights. He refuses to grovel and beg for his food. Instead he spends all his waking time looking for jobs. This makes him an easy target for exploitation. Even when he manages to get a job with a contractor he is paid very little, while women who go out to work run the risk of being ill-treated. We witnessed what life could be like for a moneyed contractor. In his camp near a roadbuilding site we saw eight young tribal girls taking "care" of him. One pressed his limbs while another his head and so on!

Non-availability of food has driven away a number of tribals from their homes. The exodus started early in November-December last year and according to a number of people emphasises the fact that the situation is worse this year. It is not surprising to find a number of villages with only the old, the infirm and the children. Ironically the Government is also exploiting them, albeit unwittingly. Project Tiger is a case in point. Killing of wild animals has now been

Extent of damage to crops in South Chotanagpur division

Crops	Normal area under crops (in lakh hectares)	Actual area covered (in lakh hectares)	Percentage of crop damage	Normal production (in lakh metric tonnes)	Estimated production in 1979 (in lakh metric tonnes)	Estimated loss in production	
						In lakh tonnes	In crores of Rs
Paddy	10.31	9.21	60%	8.66	3.75	4.91	124.15
Maize	0.77	0.63	65%	0.73	0.36	0.37	4.17
Pulses	1.27	0.67	54.5%	0.56	0.28	0.28	7.16
Oilseed	0.53	0.34	66%	0.28	0.06	0.12	3.47



A little boy carries his family's weekly ration

prohibited by law and anyone doing so is liable to a fine and imprisonment. Around Garu, herds of elephants destroy fields of crops and though the villagers try to drive them away their efforts are often futile. One day a few of them got together and killed an elephant. One of the villagers was caught and fined Rs 7,000. However, matters are different when the situation is reversed. When a man was killed by an elephant his next of kin were supposed to receive compensation to the tune of only Rs 3,000. That is not all; villagers have yet another grouse. Often cattle killed by tigers are not compensated. Officers, they say, always claim that the culprits are not tigers but either a cheetah or a leopard.

An important source of relief is the Christian missionaries but they have, it is alleged, conversions uppermost in their minds. The missionaries on the other hand have been responsible for restoring to the people some dignity and self-confidence so that they can now stand up and protest against oppression. Today, a tribal fights for his land, so it is natural for a villager to go and work on a mission-run food-for-work project. He is paid three kgs of foodgrain and a little oil but more than that he is paid fast. The missions start programmes only when foodgrain supplies are sufficient. The Catholic Charities (one of the organisations) have plans for 11,91,456 mandays of work for their 1979-80 programme which ends in October this year. The other voluntary organisation, totally funded by the Government, is the Bihar Relief Committee (BRC). The BRC's only problem is supply of foodgrain by the Government. People do not want to work on the BRC projects for the simple reason that foodgrain is delayed. BRC has a foodgrain backlog of 3,000 metric tonnes. The food-for-work programme aims at overall development of the region. Thus miniature dams are being made to store water and wells are being dug. However, the water table has gone down with the onset of summer.

The Christian missionary has always been regarded as an object of scorn primarily because of conversions, by many in the administration. In fact, after the 1967 famine it was said that the missionaries only gave aid to Christians. This time, according to a very senior Government official the Christian missionaries are still aiding people from their own religion. This is nowhere near the truth. A survey carried out by the Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi, by a non-Christian on the beneficiaries of the food-for-work programme revealed that out of 3,218 random samples taken, 1,218 were Hindus, 1,115 were Christians, 777 were Sarnas and 107 were Muslims. To test the truth we started surveying beneficiaries and in Chlpadahor we met bearded Bareilly Mian who was rather matter of fact when he was asked why, as a Muslim, he worked for the Christian missionary run food-for-work programme: "Hunger knows no religion. And digging a well or making a small bund (dam) is for the good of everyone. And we need help—no matter who gives it!"

There are, however, other facts which underline the belief that the situation is far worse than the administration thinks it to be. Of late, there has been an increase in the number of petty thefts. And often the things robbed are inexpensive—

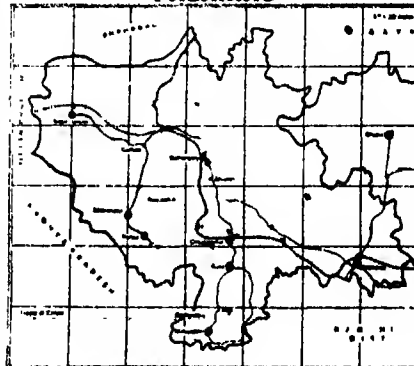
a few articles of clothing, a brass utensil

The general health of the people has been going down. They have been eating unhygienic food—wild berries, leaves and roots. The administration accepts this. Otherwise how can one justify the intensification of health measures? Civil surgeons and medical officers of the blocks (there are 25 of them in Palamau district) have been requested to pay attention to public health programmes—especially the disinfection of wells, inoculation, distribution of vitamin tablets, etc. According to Government statistics 8,166 wells have been disinfected; 1,35,000 people have been inoculated; and 2,09,360 people vaccinated in Palamau district alone. But this is all on paper. Said a well-informed social worker who did not wish to be named: "In 1967, as far as I remember, according to the Government there were only four deaths due to starvation. After all man cannot remain hungry for days on end. In desperation he starts eating whatever he can lay his hands on. The deaths occur, therefore, not due to starvation but due to acute malnutrition." Already the evidence is there for all to see: Emaciated men and women and potbellied children. In Garhwa, for example, we heard that a young girl, a student of class one, had died. The young child had advanced pneumonia and medicines hardly helped. Most people suffering from malnutrition are acutely susceptible to diseases. No amount of medicines can restore body-resistance. Young mothers, have become anaemic. Children have been suffering from worms. The result is that diseases like cholera or any other stomach ailments have become fatal. And as one Christian missionary remarked: "It's a losing battle".

In the 1967 famine, people had been more fortunate: Grains and medicines started pouring in by the ton. The situation was quite different in November 1979 when the Government started helping out. Then came the General Elections, and everything was stalled. Trucks and vehicles along with the official machinery were commandeered for the polls. After the elections, the Assam agitation started and diesel supplies were cut off completely. The coal shortage held up foodgrain wagons. And if the Food Corporation godowns had the grain, the Bihar State Civil Supplies and Food Corporation was not fast enough in moving it to the sites or blocks where the food-for-work programmes are going on. The voluntary relief agencies, however, have their own problems in moving foodgrains. The Catholic Charities carries out the food-for-work programmes with grain and oil provided through the Indo-American PL 480 agreement. Their main problem was moving the grain from Calcutta port where there was a strike, which had stopped the unloading of grains. As it stands the situation is grim.

What Palamau needs now is help. From every available source and as fast as possible. ■

PALAMAU



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Rajendra Jakkal's face was like a mask. He may have felt some pleasure at the sight of his sister swimming and splashing about in the pool at Rastapet, Pune, but his face did not show it. Neither did it reflect the anxiety that took him at the thought of getting wet. He hated water. And when his brother Vivekananda stealthily stalked up and tripped him into the pool, the boy's expression did not change. No swimmer, he silently sank and surfaced a few moments later, spluttering and flailing. As he went down again, his sister Suhasin came swimming rapidly to the rescue.

She still remembers, about 20 years later, the look on Jakkal's face as she carried him home on her back. Throughout, he never said a word," she says.

She saw her brother for the last time in 1978 in a solitary confinement cell in Yerwada Central Prison, Pune. He spoke little and both of them studiously avoided any mention of the murders. Suhasin broke down and wept. "Who will carry you home now?" she asked him again and again. The porcine eyes staring at her said nothing.

THE face is unprepossessing. Overhanging thick, sensuous lips is a wide, projecting nose that rises like a wedge and proceeds without a break up to the forehead. Set high on either side of it are small, black eyes. The face surrounding it is fleshy and amorphous, with a wide forehead. The eyes, which usually give nothing away, sometimes glint with a secret mockery. His classmates at the Abhinav Kala Vidhyalaya avoided Jakkal. He moved with measured, slow steps, and a deliberate swagger that dramatised his entries and exits. When he spoke, his voice was bass, often raised for effect. Jakkal somehow evoked fear. And behind his eyes was a methodical brain that plotted precisely the death of ten residents of Pune. Its flaw was myopia. Jakkal's detailed

plans ended with the disposal of the bodies. He never planned for an aftermath.

His two henchmen from the first were Sutar and Jagtap, his classmates at Abhinav Kala; later, Munwar Sha, studying at the Lakshmi Bazar branch of the same college, got drawn into the circle of killers through Jagtap, whom he knew. Jakkal seems to have been a magnetic, cohesive force. Without his powerful influence, it seems unlikely that these three young men's lives would have been anything but unremarkable.

Jakkal was only 23 when he committed his first kidnapping and murder. So well did he cover his tracks that the murder was discovered only two years later, and that too when Jakkal himself led the police to the body. Following his instructions, the police retrieved a drum submerged in a lake at Peshwe Park. In it were a few bones of Jakkal's good friend Prakash Hegde.

On January 15, 1976, Prakash, a student of Abhinav Kala, was summoned out of his classroom to answer an urgent telephone call. A familiar voice at the other end told him that his father had suddenly taken ill. As Prakash hurriedly left, he met Jakkal outside the college gate, astride his

JAKKAL

By C. Y. GOPINATH (SOL)

Illustrations by
SUBHASH AWCHAT (SOL)



motorbike. He offered Prakash a ride up to Vishwa Hotel, which the Hegdes owned, and the young lad unsuspectingly mounted the pillion.

Prakash was gagged and tied to a chair in Jakkal's tapri or shack on his father's land in Erandwana, a Pune locality. Near midnight, he was taken to Peshwe Park on a bicycle. On the way, Jakkal suavely assured him that his problems were over. "You're going home," he told him. "Your father has agreed to our terms." If Prakash had a glimmer of his real fate, there was no way he could voice it with his mouth gagged.

In the park, the four young men stripped Prakash and forced him to lie down on the cold grass; Jagtap sat astride his legs to keep him down. Jakkal knotted a blue-and-yellow nylon rope around his neck. Sutar held one end, Jakkal the other, and both pulled in opposite directions till Prakash was dead. The body was stuffed into a drum that had been modified for the purpose about 10 days earlier. Two handles had been welded at top and bottom. A series of holes had been bored along the rim of the open end. Through these, Jakkal and his friends now wore the nylon rope to form a mesh to seal the body in. Then, with some difficulty, they hoisted the drum on a rope and dropped it in the middle of Peshwe Park's lake.

However, Jakkal's first murder was wasted. Instead of delivering the ransom he demanded, Prakash's father and the police lay in wait at Lokmanyanagar, where the money was to be delivered. Of course, Jakkal was too smart for them. He scouted around circumspectly, spotted the CID men, and slipped away. Later, to sidetrack the investigation, he mailed a letter written by Prakash under duress stating that he had run away and was not expected back.

Jakkal's career of crime came full circle on March 23 the next year, when he and his three partners in crime murdered another trusting friend, Anil Gokhale. They wrapped his body in a sack, weighted it with a ladder, and threw it in the Mula-Mutha river of Pune. The decomposed carcass floated up two days later. Jakkal, by now cocksure that he could elude the grasp of law forever, had taken to visiting the police station at Bund Garden, and criticising their efficiency. But the police, at a dead end till then, had already begun getting interested in this overbearing young man, especially as Anil Gokhale had last been seen in his company. They took him and his friends in for interrogation. Within a few days, they had enough evidence to book them. With their arrest, a year of terror ended for Pune.

BETWEEN the murders of Prakash Hegde and Anil Gokhale, Jakkal and his friends had killed two families...a total of eight people, attempted two burglaries, in Kolhapur and Pune, and stolen goods worth about Rs 25,000. During this

period, Pune streets were deserted after sunset; police patrolled in jeeps, and any group of young men found loitering after dark were rounded up for questioning.

In the days following their arrest, Jakkal and his henchmen used to squabble among themselves, accusing each other of the negligence that led to their arrest, and dissecting their two abortive attempts at burglary. Jakkal bitterly blamed Sutar for having drunk too much alcohol before their bid to rob the Kolhapur oil merchant Arvind Kashid.

But the bickering is over. In September 1978, W. N. Bapat, Additional Sessions Judge, Pune, sentenced them all to death, on charges of entering into a criminal conspiracy and committing 10 murders in cold blood. Thousands crowded the spacious court compound to hear the verdict. Reading from a 300-page judgment, Bapat said, somewhat dramatically, "The accused never saw meadows but only graves, never saw stars but only mud. They learnt little about life but much about death." The "accused" were dressed impeccably, as usual; they seemed to regard themselves as folk heroes of some sort. Jakkal is said to have lost consciousness briefly after the sentence was passed. But one in Pune who has studied him at close quarters, says, "Jakkal never loses consciousness. He decides to lose consciousness."

What turns a young man like Jakkal into a cold-blooded, calculating killer? Does it run in his blood? Is it his gift from heredity, installed in his genetic code? Or did he suffer a traumatic knock on his head as a baby, which permanently perverted that vital organ? Was he the victim of aberrant chromosomes, crooked endocrine glands, or was he just raised in a vicious environment?

It would be presumptuous for anyone but a psychologist who has made a detailed study of Jakkal to attempt answers to these questions. What follows in this article, then, is not analysis or explanation, but merely certain intriguing facts about Jakkal's life, which indicate that his mind and inner motivations may be well worth a closer look.

He was born and brought up in one of Pune's most congested localities, Budhwarpet. His father Yallappa Jakkal, bore the scars that life leaves on a man who decides to fend for himself. As a young man, Yallappa travelled to Pune from Satara district, his home, and taught himself photography. Virtually lifting himself up by the bootstraps, he finally set up a small studio in Lakshmi Bazar, and bought himself a modest flat on the third floor of the same building. He married, and fathered five children—two sons and three daughters. Jakkal was the youngest.

According to psychologists, the child's relationship with his parents is crucial to his growth. Criminal tendencies may develop if he feels that they treated him unjustly, or

deprived him of love, money, or gifts. When Jakkal was arrested, he stated baldly that his father was to blame for turning him into a killer, by denying him love. Such a clear analysis of his own subconscious urgings, coming from Jakkal himself, sounds carefully plotted rather than spontaneous. Besides, despite all his ranting, Jakkal still had no one to turn to for help but his father; he demanded an audition with him.

It was an unpleasant, shrill meeting. Jakkal was abusive, and accused his father of wishing him dead. He demanded that he should sign over a part of his property to Jakkal, to pay for the court charges. Yallappa stormed out, swearing he would have nothing to do with this killer he had bred. Nevertheless, at the crunch, he did pay the Rs 50,000 or so which Jakkal's case cost. To raise the money, he even sold off part of his property around Pune. Of course, he never attended the court hearings.

My meeting with Jakkal's father was brief and ended peremptorily. He came across to me as a highly charged, emotional individual, prone to tears and unbidden outbursts of temper. One who has met him says that he was highly covetous of the respectability he had won in one generation, and dreaded losing it in the next. Consequently, he ruled his household with an iron hand.

GARISH pink and blue walls give the approach to Yallappa's Swastik Studio the look of a small town barber shop. Lining the stairway are old, sepia prints of college alumni meets, luminaries of Pune, and unreal, powder-puffed women of marriageable age. I knocked on the door on the third floor, and after a pause, it opened a crack. Yallappa Jakkal stood on the other side.

His eyes were red-veined and bulbous. The muscle of youth had turned to flab on his hairy body, and he was balding. I got the impression that he might bang the door shut without saying a single word.

"Who are you?" he demanded, in a hoarse voice. "What do you want?" I made a gesture inquiring if I might enter, but the door did not budge.

"I'm trying to find out a few things about your son Jakkal..." I began.

"He is not my son," he shouted suddenly. "Do you understand that? He's gone. I wash my hands off him. Now will you please leave us alone?"

"I am not really interested in the murders..." I continued, but the word set off a fresh torrent.

"Murders!" he shouted. "Don't dare mention that word before me. If you are a gentleman. Or I will call the cops."

"...as his father, you are the only one who can tell me if there was anything redeeming about your son." I persisted.

"Nothing redeeming!" he shouted. "I don't want to talk about him, do you follow that?" He suddenly lowered his voice, and spoke in a quivering, but more controlled tone,

**Aren't you glad that the nicest things
in life never lose their freshness?**





Since all this happened, my life is a wreck. So carefully built up, all gone now. My staff at the studio has left me. Our windowpanes are smashed—people throw stones. My friends don't greet me." He withdrew into some grieving recess of thought. The door had opened a little wider, and I saw that Jakkal's father wore a singlet and a thin green cotton towel. Suddenly, as though rousing himself, he said, "Have I not told you to leave? So go!" The door slammed shut.

I had hoped also to meet Suhasini, Jakkal's sister. But my interlude with Yallappa was clearly at an end. So the next morning, I travelled to Lonavla, an hour's journey by train from Pune. Suhasini, a spinster, had chosen teaching as her vocation, and taught at a school here. By all accounts, Jakkal was—or used to be—closer to her than anyone else in his family. I hoped she might illuminate a lesser known side of his nature.

The school's authorities have been thoughtful to Suhasini, not ostracising her for her brother's crimes. Her pupils think well of her, for she is gentle and kind-hearted. "She spends her own money to buy gifts for boys who do well," one of her students told me.

Suhasini was in the middle of class when she received news of her bro-

ther's arrest, from one of her pupils. It was some time before she grasped its full import. Then the tears came. She has still not quite recovered; the mention of Jakkal's name reduces her to sobbing fits. She sat in the empty staff room and spoke of her lost brother.

"He was never like that", she wept. "He was so outstanding in school. He shone in sport. Every day, at bedtime, he would chat with me, and tell me all that he'd said, and done, and thought during the day. I cannot believe what he's done—something must have possessed him. He can't have been himself."

"Were you as close even after he joined college?" I asked.

"I took a flat here in Lonavla for Rs 75 a month," she spoke absently, not hearing my question. "He used to sometimes drive down on his motorbike, and spend some days here..."

"Alone?" I asked.

"A few times. Sometimes his friends came too—those friends. He didn't like me to speak to them. He didn't think it was correct for a girl to mix freely with boys."

"How did he pass the time in Lonavla?"

"Oh, they talked, I suppose. I don't know, I had my classes. But he liked to paint. Sometimes, he brought his canvases, and found a

lonely spot on a hill, and painted. He painted landscapes."

"Did you and he ever find time for conversation?"

"We grew apart after he joined college," she said a little sadly. "He was busy, he had his friends, and I was preoccupied with classes. We spoke less and less—but how could I have guessed how much he'd changed?" A new paroxysm of sobbing seized her. With an effort, she controlled it, and carried on, "He was very particular about how his sister behaved. I like Hindi films and see as many as I can; he considered them a waste of time. He used to chide me, saying, 'If you really love something so much, you should indulge yourself sparingly, or else you will grow tired through surfeit.'"

"Did he enjoy music?" I asked.

"He was a very sensitive boy," she answered. "I still remember his favourite song—he would sing these two lines so often..."

Gharat hasre taare asta

Mi pahu kashala naghakade?"

Translated roughly, these lines mean, Why should I seek the stars in the sky, when I have them at home? This was a different Jakkal from the one newspapers knew: a man who liked to paint alone on a hilltop; who relished the sentiments expressed in song; who believed in a frugal attitude toward pleasures. Somehow it did not match the image of a calculating brute killer.

In Pune, I met Sumi Awchat, who had been in Jakkal's class in the foundation course. Her husband, Subash, used to teach in the same college. Both of them confirm that when Jakkal was at work on his drawings, he was serious and utterly absorbed. "He had a good hand—not brilliant, but well above average," attests Subash. "But his preoccupations took him further and further away from studies. We rarely saw him in class; his attendance was poor, and he failed once. He switched to Commercial Art, but had the same problems there. In his second or third year, he dropped out of college altogether."

"We used to avoid Jakkal," says Sumi. "He was not attractive to girls, though he used to adopt an air of machismo to impress them." But though the girls were unimpressed, many others, including the Principal, D. K. Dingle, stood in awe of Jakkal. "Dingle and Jakkal's father were friends," says Subash. "There was something more going on here than I can understand, because Dingle was singularly reluctant to dismiss Jakkal from college, though he made it very clear that he did not like him, and wished him out. He finally dismissed him only when the order came from higher up."



NCE, Dingle sent a note to Jakkal summoning him to his office. Jakkal passed word back that no one, including the Principal, could presume to order him about. Dingle, affronted, took himself to the art class, and called out

to Jakkal. Without looking up from his work, Jakkal bellowed, in a voice that froze the Principal in his tracks. "OUT!"

Subash was among the few teachers who could handle Jakkal when he was rampant. He particularly remembers an incident at the annual faculty picnic, to an elevated spot known as Amrutanjani Point, close to Pune.

"Jakkal was always claiming to have money problems," says Subash. "It was one of his favourite topics. He said five rupees was too much to pay for the picnic, and refused to come along. But his purpose was not to miss the picnic but to draw attention to himself. Just as we reached Amrutanjani Point, he drove up on his motorbike. He must have spent more than five rupees on petrol."

Jakkal proceeded straight to the plateau, where the students had settled themselves, and made to join them. One of the professors, P. C. Kamble, who thought no good of Jakkal, accosted him and ordered him away.

"Who do you think you are?" retorted Jakkal. "Do you own this land?"

A boy in the crowd, safe in the obscurity of numbers, shouted an obscenity at Jakkal. Jakkal at once drew a knife. "Which...said that?" he yelled. The professors backed away, and quiet fell over the picnic. Jakkal stalked through the crowd, demanding, "Who said that? Step out here, and repeat that to my face."

Just then, Subash ambled up. He quickly sized up the situation, and strode up to Jakkal. Talking quietly but firmly, he disarmed him within a few minutes. Then he took him aside for a chat. To his surprise, Jakkal broke down and started crying. "Everyone rejects me," wailed Jakkal. "I'm not wanted in class. The Principal would like to see me out of the college. My parents don't care where I am or what I do. I'm no good to anyone. I'm no good." The outburst was as brief as it was unexpected. Jakkal quickly recovered his normal spirits and drove off.

On March 24, 1977, Jagtap and Sutar met Subash after an art exam, and congratulated him on his having become a father recently. Subash remembers that the two were dressed in black, and had vermilion on their foreheads, a sign that they had prayed before attending the exam. Nothing in their demeanour indicated that they had been up till 4.30 am the previous night. From their relaxed manner, it was impossible to guess that they, with Jakkal and Munwar Sha, had killed Anil Gokhale only the previous night.

Anil's remains the most curious of Jakkal's murders, though police found enough evidence to implicate him. However, several questions remain niggling, and unanswered. Jakkal knew Anil only casually; he was a much closer friend of Anil's elder brother, Jayant. On March 23, he visited the Gokhale's house looking for Jayant—whether intending murder or not, it is uncertain. But

Jayant was at a friend's house, preparing for an examination in screen printing the next day. Anil, who was home, volunteered to accompany Jakkal to Alka Talkies, where he guessed Jayant might have gone for an errand—and made the costliest mistake of his life. Jakkal had apparently decided that since the elder brother was out, the younger one would have to do. About two hours later, Anil's body was at the bottom of the Mula-Mutha river.

More baffling, it seems that till about 8.30 that night, Jakkal had been in readiness to go to Thane, to have a tooth problem attended to by a dentist. But he appears to have made a last minute change of plan at Sutar's house, and decided that it was a night for murder instead. This itself was uncharacteristic of Jakkal, for his crimes were usually methodically and patiently planned, and meticulously carried out.

I met Jayant in Pune, and asked him if he might not have been Jakkal's actual target. "I don't know," he replied. "Perhaps I was. By the way, I should explain that Jakkal was not a friend of mine. No one was more surprised than I, when he came to my house at 1.30 that night, after killing my brother."

Jayant is a slim, somewhat wan, young man with an angular face. He remembers March 23 well. As he drove up to his house on his scooter, he heard Anil's Alsatian Rommel baying. This was unusual, for Rommel was a quiet dog. Outside the wicket gate of the house, Jayant spotted Jakkal and his three friends lurking, just as the house lights came on. His father, apparently not asleep, threw open the door, and demanded with some irritation, "What time is this to come home? Where have you been? And where's Anil? I thought he was returning with you?" Jayant parked his scooter and entered the house, arguing with his father. In the confusion, the four young men slipped in behind him.

Inside the house, a short, uncomfortable silence followed. Then Jakkal asked innocuously, "By the way, where's Anil?"

"I don't know," snapped Jayant. "He left here with you, you should know."

There was another odd silence. Sutar, Jagtap, and Munwar Sha were murmuring to each other, exchanging secretive smiles. This struck Jayant as odd, for Jagtap was usually the garrulous one, and Jakkal the more reserved. Clearly, tonight was somehow different, and Jakkal was in charge.

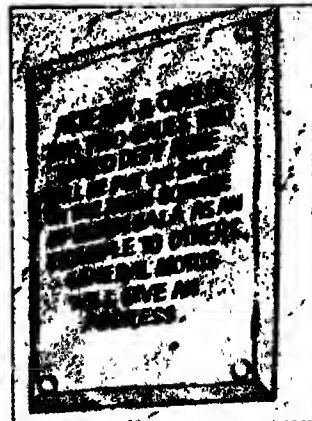
Finally, Jayant said brusquely, "What do you fellows want, at this time of night? It's nearly two and I'm tired."

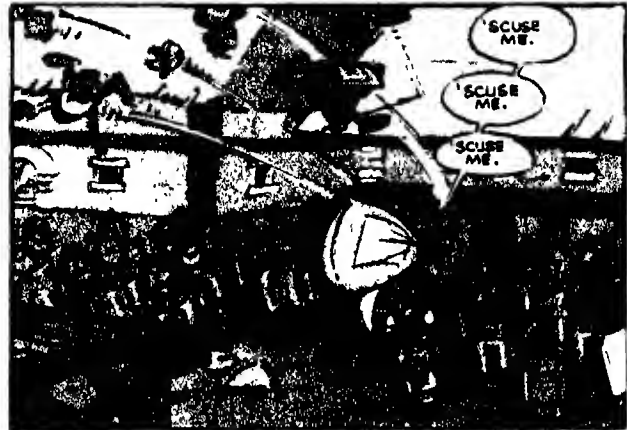
Jakkal gestured that he would like to discuss something confidential with Jayant. A little impatiently Jayant took him into a study, where Jakkal said, "Actually, it's about my wedding. You know, I'm engaged. I want you to design a special, modern wedding card for me."

"At this time of night?" Jayant burst out incredulously. "Your mar-

Continued on page

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO





riage can't wait till tomorrow morning?"

"Well, no," replied Jakkal, unruffled. "It's a rush job."

There was some more aimless conversation, then the four left. Jayant could not make any sense of it—till much later, when the body floated up. "I can only guess that he came to establish an alibi for himself. Twice, he asked me where Anil was, as though he was truly concerned."

HAD Jakkal grown reckless in his success? Perhaps. Some of the latest studies in criminology indicate that one trait of the criminal mind is superoptimism. The criminal, in the days and hours before the crime, convinces himself beyond doubt that the crime will succeed and he will not be caught. He uses a mental process called a "cutoff", to block out completely fears that might otherwise prevent him from committing the crime.

This observation is from a most controversial study by Samuel Yochelson and Stanton Samenow, two criminologists. For 16 years, they studied some 240 criminal patients at Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Washington DC, spending hundreds of hours with each of them, and as many as 8,000 hours with a few. Then, from more than a quarter of a million pages of notes, they drew a startling conclusion: there is such a thing as a criminal personality. Even though it may not be innate, it exists from a very early age. For the most

part, upbringing and surroundings only foster it, but do not create it.

The authors identified 52 "errors of thinking" that characterised the criminal personality. He "can commit brutal acts without a twinge of conscience, and yet continue to believe that he is 'a good person'". He finds the restraints of responsible living unacceptable, and even contemptible. He disregards other people's rights to live safely, but demands that others show him the utmost consideration... Untrustworthy himself, he demands that others trust him. If he happens to earn others' trust, he exploits it."

Samenow and Yochelson found five traits prominent in the criminals they interviewed, and they seem to be comparable to several aspects of Jakkal's personality. It is important to mention here that no qualified psychiatric study of Jakkal has been attempted, and this one is not a substitute. Samenow and Yochelson's paper is itself the subject of a controversy.

Extreme fearfulness. They say that the criminal mind is virtually consumed by fears, small and large, real and imagined, ranging from heights, water, or closed spaces, to physical injury, death, and most interesting, any event that implied "rejection or put down". There is only a little evidence to indicate that Jakkal may have had a morbid fear of water. Subasini states that he hated water from an early age and never learnt to swim.

Extreme and persistent anger. "The criminal is chronically angry—even as he walks down the street

it is most dangerous when it is not on the surface. Anger is as basic to his personality as the iris is to the eye."

Everyone who knew Jakkal attests to his wrath. He expressed it powerfully, to control and subdue those he dealt with. But the most evocative picture of Jakkal in a temper comes from Jayant. "Sometimes, while we'd be sitting at Hotel Vishwa, drinking, tea, I've noticed him lose his cool," he says. "It was a chilling sight. He goes very very still and quiet. His face becomes absolutely expressionless. He does nothing at all, but you get a feeling of solid danger."

Zero State. "Criminals frequently go through periods when they are convinced that they are absolutely worthless, and that their situation in life is hopeless... Rather than appearing flat, inert, and despairing, he is blazing with anger." The only instance of such thoughts in Jakkal is his outburst of tears during the picnic at Amrutanjan Point, and his remark, "I'm no good."

Criminal Pride. The criminal personality is able to wrench himself out of his depressive fits by sheer force of will, and replace it with an extremely and inflexibly high evaluation of himself. This criminal pride usually pertains to questions of "manhood", and a belief that one can conquer all obstacles and challenges, especially those involving women.

At one time, Jakkal apparently claimed to have been carrying on affairs with 17 girls simultaneously. His claims are not supported by the descriptions others give. He seems rather

No swimmer, he silently sank, and surfaced a few moments later, spluttering and flailing.





The 'accused' were dressed impeccably, as usual, and seemed to regard themselves as folk heroes of some sort.

to have been shunned by women. During his year of crime, he negotiated with and got engaged to a girl living in Vartak Ashram, Pune. Apart from this, he seems not to have had any known "affairs".

Superoptimism. Jakkal and his friends had a strong ability to "cut off" thoughts of the consequences of their crimes. On December 1, 1976, they committed the five murders that electrified Pune, and brought the crimes into the national news. Breaking into Smruti, a private bungalow, they garrotted a respected Sanskrit scholar of 86. Kashinath Shastri Abhyankar; his aged wife. Indirabai; their grandson Dhananjay; their grand-daughter Jai; and an old retainer, Sakubai. They left with over Rs 25,000 worth of jewellery and valuables.

Later, Jakkal boastfully described their actions after the murders. They had strolled down to an Irani cafe called Good Luck, and eaten a hearty dinner. Then they had returned to the Abhyankars' bungalow, and joined the spectator crowd at the gate. Jakkal even claimed that they had attended the funeral a few days later. He apparently had an extraordinary capacity to watch the aftermath of his crimes without being disturbed by his own role in them.

He has had more than a year in solitary confinement in Yerwada prison to review his past and contemplate his future. It seems that he is still "cut off" from a complete understanding of his deeds. A remark in a letter he wrote to his defence counsel last Diwali, shows a striking new development in his thinking. "...Everyone is subject to changes," he wrote. "I want you to know that whatever I did, God did through me."



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Temple cathedral

By SAHASRAGSHU KANTA ACHARYA

SATISH Grover has rendered yeoman's service to an increasingly widening circle of discerning tourists, students and the general reader. His book constitutes a useful guide to some of the basic problems of Buddhist and Hindu architecture and gives an insight as well as an understanding into the evolution of architectural design and formulae of this period. So much historic and academic knowhow has been poured into this mould that it is refreshing to find a readable book that is dedicated to both the scholar and the lay reader.

Of course, Mr Grover's tirades against petty Brahmins like us, who peep about the colossus of our own bogies and who built merely for self-glorification, are amusing. Take for example the author's assertions that the Brahmins "diverted the attention of the ever-suffering commoner from his daily woes to promises of a blissful existence through the worship of the expanding Hindu pantheon", or (in reference to Khajuraho) "the Brahmin having earned his due from performing the marriage ceremony posted erotica on his temples to ensure continued indulgence by the novice couple", or that the "art of building was not going to be an exception to the 'Brahmins merciless Iron web'". However, immediately after berating the "Brahmin's iron web" the author cannot but acknowledge that the success of the web is "borne out by the high quality of Indian temple building activity through the centuries". His views are obviously slanted and calculated to arouse the ire of this section of the community whose contribution to the texture of Indian history is immeasurable. One cannot help but feel that the author has been fed on old wives' tales of north Indian puritanism!

Starting from the paraphernalia of urban life generated by the Indus Valley Civilisation, the book traces the development of the permanent architecture of the stupas and toranas of the Buddhists, which was inspired largely by the timber and other folk forms of the earliest Aryan settlements in the Indo Gangetic Plain. After looking at the "seeds of a nationwide revival of Brahminism" which were sown under the aegis of the Guptas the book traces the story of many Brahmins and Hindu craftsmen in search of an appropriate Hindu shrine. This search, research and early experimentation in places like Aihole, Badami, Bhitargaon and Mahabalipuram ultimately gave rise to what Satish Grover refers to as "the temple cathedrals" of Tanjore, Khajuraho and Konarak. In doing so he also manages to give us an insight to the art of rock carving and cutting which gave a unique slant.

Orissa, the author says, "is yet another example of the crafty collusion whereby the king and priest ruled over a people (who) were quite content to live in hovels and in mean habitations, but for the houses of gods they would shun neither expenditure nor labour." But more substantial answers are to be found in the graphics in the book. For instance, the evolution of the crystalline form of the Buddhist stupa from a humble funeral mound, or the birth of the Shikhara and the Vimana by the applications of rigid geometry to rural forms, or the revolutionary concept of the square to the star-like profiles of the Halebid capital, and the resultant temple of Channa Keshava at Belur and Somnathpur by Janaka Acharya during the 12th century, give us adequate explanations and a satisfying sense of their design. The purity of design again, of the Meenakshi temple at Madurai is given a reasonable analysis. The author, however, does make an attempt to isolate the rather obtuse "theories" of Hindu architecture in which "formulae are drawn up to indicate how the thickness of a wall or span between the columns of a temple was to be determined from the day or time when construction commenced...the caste of the major donor and even the position of the stars in the sky". At the same time it is equally surprising to learn that almost all the apparent "erotica" of Hindu temples is derived from "the magic of the square", which to the Hindu symbolised "stability rather than mobility" as implied in the circle of the Buddhist stupa or Leonardo da Vinci's man in a circle.

The Architecture of India : Buddhist and Hindu, by Satish Grover (Vikas, Rs 125)

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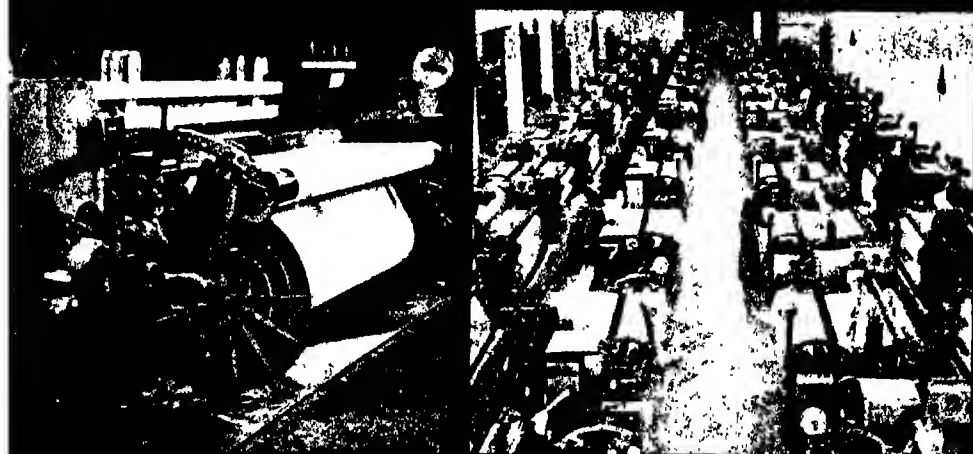


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How did Poornima die?

SCENE one: Three men are drinking with a vivacious young woman at the National Sports Club of India in Delhi. The woman gulps down her drinks faster than the men, and smokes continuously. Soon, all glasses are emptied. It is 7 pm, closing time for liquor shops in Delhi. But the men and woman want more liquor. So they decide to go to the Delhi-Bardabad border and buy a bottle of whisky. Even this is emptied all too soon, the woman doing most of the drinking.

Scene two. It is almost midnight. The three men and the woman drive to "Gulati's", a restaurant on the Pandara Road market. While the men enter the eating place, the woman stays back in the car, refusing to get down. "I am not a whore. I will not go in," she shouts. Finally, after much persuasion she agrees to accompany the men. Another heated argument follows. The woman changes her mind, and the foursome leave. The time is about 12.30 a.m. The shouting draws the attention of the waiters and other customers, but most choose to dismiss it as another of the usual drunken brawls.

Scene three. The Curzon Road apartments look dark and desolate. One of the three men get off the car on Curzon Road to fetch cigarettes. The panshop does not have his favourite brand, India Kings, so he takes a taxi to Connaught Place to get them. Meanwhile, the other two men drive into the Curzon Road apartments' compound. The gateman at the barrier gate notes the time. It is 12.40 a.m. The woman is still quarreling with one of the men.

Scene four: A woman's scream shatters the silence. Moments later, the gateman at the barrier hears a heavy thud. It is a little after 1.10 a.m. The scream brings chowkidars scurrying to the scene. Windows open in many of the apartments. A crowd collects to see what has happened.

Not more than seven minutes after the scream was heard, a green Ambassador sneaks up to the barrier. The gateman stops the car. He notices it is the same car that drove through at 12.40 a.m. He tells the two men in the car to wait till the cause of the woman's scream is investigated. The men get out and start shouting at the gateman. One of them says, "I am a Minister and he is a Member of Parliament. We don't know about any scream. Let us go, we have urgent business." The gateman refuses to give way.

One of the men then asks the gateman if he can go and relieve himself. Since the car is in the road

AJOY BOSE investigates



Poornima Singh

pound, the gateman permits him to cross the barrier. Before he can bat an eyelid, the surprised chowkidar sees that the man, instead of relieving himself, has taken to his heels and disappeared into the darkness.

Meanwhile, the chowkidars and residents who have collected in the compound spot a huddled figure lying on the pavement near the rear corner of the "E" block of apartments. A closer look shows it to be the body of a woman, clad in a *salwar* and *kameez*. The *kameez* is torn, exposing the woman's belly and left breast. There are deep bruises on both the belly and breast. Her face too has a number of bruises. Blood is oozing from her nose and the back of her head. She is obviously dead.

While the crowd is busy inspecting the body, the other man starts moving towards it. On coming near the body, he mumbles something to himself and then suddenly, like his companion, starts running. With the chowkidars and the crowd giving chase, the man jumps over the Cur-

zon Road apartment gates and tries to overpower a passing cyclist. The cyclist puts up a struggle and in the melee that follows, the man is caught. He is also roughed up a little in the process, in spite of loud protestations that he is a "Member of Parliament".

While the crowd is roughing up the man, his companion returns in a taxi after having got his cigarettes. Seeing the crowd, he too does a quick disappearing act.

Scene five: Home Minister Zail Singh is rung up late at night. A few minutes later Delhi Police Chief P. S. Bhinder's phone rings. The police chief arrives at the Curzon Road apartments by 2.30 am the same night. A sleepy psychiatrist is dragged out of bed at 3 am to identify the woman whose body was found. He declares her to be a psychiatric patient of his who suffered from "suicidal tendencies".

SUCH was the drama behind the death in the early hours of Friday, March 28 of Poornima Singh, wife of a senior Punjab Police officer. The man who was caught is none other than Devendra Singh Garcha, a leading Indira Congress Member of Parliament. One of the biggest landowners of his constituency, Ludhiana, Garcha was a top contender for the Chief Ministership of Punjab. Elected thrice as Member of Parliament, Garcha's name was the first to be announced by the Congress (I) when the results of the January mid-term polls were broadcast. (Many TV viewers will recall seeing his face on the screen). The man who said he wanted to relieve himself and ran away instead, was another Congress (I) personage, Balbir Singh, the former Health Minister of Punjab and a nephew of Sardar Swarn Singh. Balbir Singh was also one of the leading Punjab Congress (I) politicians and was sure to get a post in the Punjab Cabinet after the Assembly election. The third man who had gone to get cigarettes was Brahm Mahender, general secretary of the Punjab Congress (I). The woman whose body was found was Mrs Poornima Singh, the 27-year-old wife of Bhatinda's senior Superintendent of Police, Sarabjeet Singh, an old friend of Garcha.

Poornima's mysterious death is perhaps one of the most sensational in the history of crime in Delhi. Although the police with the significantly willing help of Poornima Singh's husband and relatives have tried their best to dismiss the whole affair as a "simple suicide", too many questions remain unanswered.

Firstly what was the exact relationship between Devendra Singh

Garcha and Poornima Singh? According to Garcha, he was "only looking after" Poornima because her husband told him to do so. The strained relations between Poornima and her husband, however, raise doubts about her relationship with Garcha. According to her friends and relatives, within a few years of her marriage to Sarabjeet Singh, Poornima had grown tired of living in Punjab and wanted a faster and merrier life. She had taken to alcohol and smoking, which her husband disapproved of, particularly because he was a Sikh.

The unhappy relationship between husband and wife is evident from one particular incident: One day Sarabjeet Singh took Poornima out to the Chinols Night Club in the Oberoi Intercontinental in Delhi. Poornima as usual, smoked continuously. Sarabjeet Singh repeatedly asked his wife to stop smoking, but she ignored him. After a while, Poornima went to the toilet leaving her lighted cigarette on the ashtray. When she came back Poornima found that her husband had stubbed it out. Furious, the woman, slapped her husband in public and flew into a tantrum. The couple had to leave the night club hurriedly.

As the years passed by, the couple were increasingly estranged. Poornima was often missing for days together from her husband's house. Because, she was young and beautiful, Poornima had enough friends willing to take her out. However she became increasingly petulant and irate. Her husband had paid for her visits to a number of psychiatrists who did not find very much wrong with her except that she was a highly-strung young woman who had taken to drinking heavily. According to some friends, Poornima was essentially in need of constant attention and would get very upset if somebody ignored her.

There are varying reports on when Poornima met the slim and dapper Garcha but since the latter was an old friend of her husband, it is likely that the two knew each other for quite some time. There are reports that Garcha had an affair with Poornima for the last few years and even promised to marry her. Garcha himself strongly denies this.

Whatever the truth is, one thing is quite clear. When Poornima came to Delhi in March this year, she chose to stay in the flat where Garcha stayed with a bachelor journalist-friend of his, and not with her sister and brother-in-law. It was only two days later that she moved to her sister's flat. The fact that the two stayed together in the house without another woman is strange for a man and woman involved in a platonic relationship. So is the fact that Poornima drank with Garcha and his friends. Secondly, the very fact that Garcha ran away from the spot and did not stay back to investigate the death of one he described as "an old friend's wife" itself arouses suspicion. None of the three Punjab Congress (i) readers could later explain their curious behaviour on the

night Poornima fell to her death. What were they afraid of? Surely not a routine suicide enquiry?

Thirdly, Garcha cannot explain what he and Balbir Singh did in the mysterious gap of time between 12.40 am when they reached the apartments and 1-10 am, when Poornima screamed. In his statement to the police, Garcha said that they dropped Poornima at the entrance of the apartment block and did not go up with her in the lift. What then were they doing for the whole of 30 minutes?

Fourthly, the police theory that Poornima jumped to her death from the eighth floor, where her sister and brother-in-law stay, has a serious loophole. Just below the eighth floor balcony from where Poornima is said to have jumped, there are two large TV antennas lutting out from the sixth and fifth floor. Anybody who fell or jumped from the balconies above would inevitably hit the antennas; but these were undisturbed. The only two ways in which Poornima could avoid the antennas are either by being thrown clear off the balcony, or by climbing the three-foot-high railing and leaping clear. For a woman less than five feet tall, climbing the slippery rounded railing

The apartments



of the balcony would be quite a difficult feat. And if she wore high-heel shoes, as Poornima did, this would seem near-impossible.

These points that must be considered—even if one ignores the fact that a person who commits suicide normally does not clutch her handbag in her hand as well.

The contradictions between the statements of her sister and brother-in-law and the police version of Poornima's death, are also intriguing. While the police claimed that Poornima had suicidal tendencies and took the trouble of contacting her psychiatrist at 3 am in the morning to prove their point, Poornima's sister Chandralekha said that her sister was just a "happy-go-lucky" girl. Later of course, the police announced that all of Poornima's relatives had given an identical statement—that she was suffering from "endogenous depression" and that she had "suicidal tendencies".

The role of the police in the whole episode has been shameful. From the very beginning, the police had been plugging the "suicide theory" and imposed a complete news-blackout on enterprising reporters. The very fact that the police Chief P. S. Bhinder was on the case from 2.30 in the morning is indication that the police were treating the death of Poornima as a top-priority case and were treading with care.

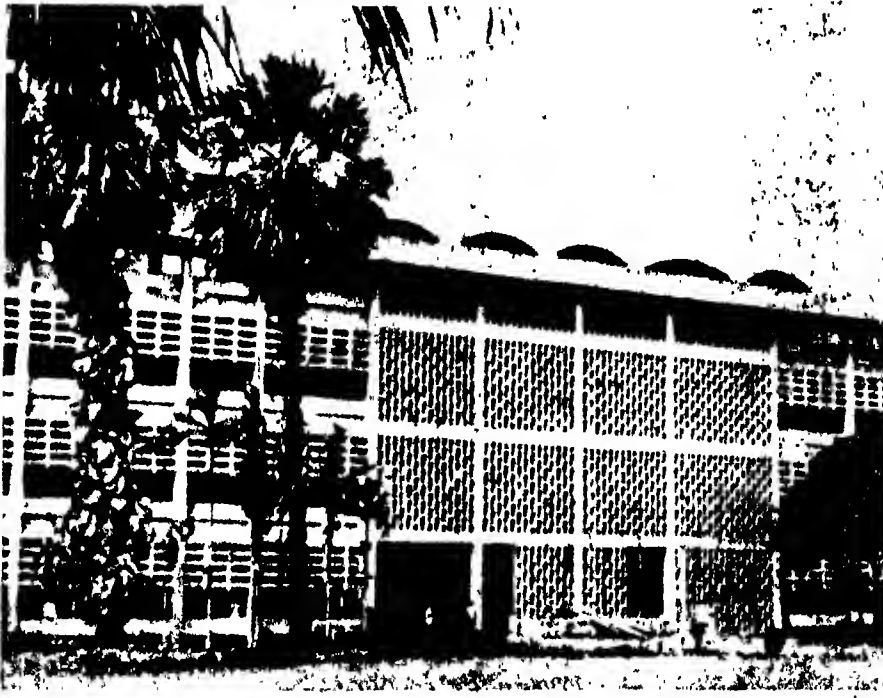
A number of disturbing reports about the incident circulated in the capital which both the police, Garcha and the other Indira Congressmen involved, refused to corroborate. One of them is that Poornima had become a nuisance both to her husband as well as Garcha and neither knew how to deal with her. Therefore this could very well be a motive for getting rid of Poornima. Another possibility is that Poornima Singh might have been thrown from the fourth floor which is below the TV antennas. A flat on the fourth floor of the "E" block of the Curzon Road apartments is reportedly occupied by a friend of Brahm Mahender, one of those involved in the case.

The show-cause notice issued by the Indira Congress to Garcha and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's orders for a probe into the incident mean that Garcha's political career must take a plunge for the moment. So will that of his other colleagues involved in the incident. Balbir Singh's name has already been taken off the Punjab election committee and Brahm Mahender is likely to be removed soon from the general secretaryship. There are also many enemies of Garcha in the Party who will not let Mrs Gandhi forget the incident. The detailed coverage of the case in Yashpal Kapoor's *National Herald* and later an editorial condemning Garcha, are indication that many in the Congress (i) are happy about his discomfiture.

Whatever turn Garcha's political future takes, it is highly unlikely that the Government would actually reveal the full details of how Poornima Singh died.

Engineering trouble at Bombay IIT

Who is to blame?



IIT Bombay

ON the surface of things the re-opening of the Indian Institute of Technology in phases between March 31 and April 7, 1980 is deceptively peaceful but the underlying discontent of the students cannot be underestimated. In fact, Director D. K. De will probably find his troubles have only begun. The Bombay IIT was closed down for the first time in its 20-year old history on March 7, after the Director was ceremoniously escorted by the police from a peaceful gherao by over 600 students of the Institute on March 7. The 2,400 students from the 10 hostels were given three days to move out of the hostels, the outstation and foreign students were accommodated on the neighbouring NITIE campus.

The immediate provocation for this action was the gherao of Director D. K. De by the students. These students were expressing their sympathy with four students who had gone on hunger strike protesting against their being asked to leave the Institute for not meeting the Institute's academic requirements. Colleagues of these students thought this action unfair. As one of them explained: "Taking the criteria that the authorities apply in the grading system,

384 of the 1,484 undergraduates are deficient in their performance". The students' magazine *Technik* commented: "If the Institute takes credit for the 'brilliant' student, why does it treat the deficient student so shabbily when he is a product of the same system? Of the four, one has spent only one year in the Institute, whereas there are many students in the third, fourth and fifth year classes with as many as 20 subjects as backlog. This particular student had a high all-India rank in the joint entrance examination and had every chance of improvement if corrective measures were taken. The faculty adviser of the student stood firmly behind him. The two foreign students and one scheduled caste student were admitted with the knowledge of their being weak students and there is no point in complaining on that score. No additional help was given to them besides telling them from time to time that they are deficient. The scheduled caste students have a problem because of their cultural background and this is evident in the experience at the Institute. Of the 181 scheduled caste students admitted between 1975-78 there are only 95 left".

A fourth year B.Tech student, Aloysius Rego filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court and submitted that the Director was no authority in law to take a decision to close the Institute and students having submitted an apology, no disturbed situation existed. Yet the Director went ahead with the closure. He also stated that the Director's actions were mala fide as he wanted to tackle alleged irregularities in room allotment, those students indulging in drinking, drugs and women and also the so called extremist elements on the campus.

Meanwhile the Director announced that he was opening the Institute and that all students individually would have to sign a declaration stating that: 1) I reaffirm "to abide by the rules and accept the discipline of the Institute; 2) I will not join any coercive agitation for the purpose of forcing the hands of the authorities to solve any problem; 3) I will not participate in any activity which has a tendency to disturb the peace and orderly life in the campus and 4) I will co-operate with the Institute authorities in maintaining discipline, academic standards and good order in the campus". The guardians had to sign a separate declaration which says "I have seen the above undertaking given by my ward and I will endeavour to use my good offices with my ward to do his/her best to observe the undertaking given above."

Aloysius Rego went to Court for the second time with a petition claiming that the Director of the Institute was no authority in law to frame rules of discipline which can only be done by an ordinance issued by the senate. He also contended that the clauses of the bond were vague and unlawful and rests arbitrary and unguided in the Director and tends to violate the fundamental rights under Article 19 of the Constitution of India. Rego prayed for an order to allow him to continue his studies unconditionally, signing the bond. The students have been directed to sign the bond under protest, without prejudice to their right to challenge its legality and validity.

Perhaps most of the students will sign the bond because they are interested in pursuing their studies. The Director has won the first round of the battle. But the war will certainly continue because the problems are much deeper. The underlying problems of the students lies in the atmosphere of the campus and the apathy of the authorities to student problems.

In a letter dated 8.11.78 a senate member noted: "Before feeling indignant at students, the senate should ponder as to what extent the present administration is responsible for this development. Occasional writings in *Technik* clearly show that students notice manipulation and double handling of students' affairs. It would be

a sad thing if the academicians constituting the senate shy away from a full range discussion of these glaring incidents and their effect on students' behaviour". He further goes on to say: "In the senate meeting of 20.1.78 to justify the pressing need for senate action, examples of students' indiscipline were cited, one of which was supposed to be drinking liquor. It is very unfortunate that the senate was not given time to ponder over such delinquencies. How the present administration of the Institute can criticise any lapse on the part of students when it permitted and participated in the drinking revelry with ex-students on the Alumni Day in 1975-76? Do not some faculty members know that drinks are served on occasions in gatherings and rooms of the Institute's guest house? Obviously if the senate is asked to legislate against drinking on part of students, then sanity demands that the senate must, at first, pronounce clearly against serving drinks in the precincts of the Institute and participation of senate members in drinking sessions". Several incidents of this nature and several corruption charges against the authorities which have gone unpunished triggered off the events that culminated in the fast by students, the gherao of the Director and the subsequent closure of the Institute.

While the Court has been unable to give any justice to the students, though one of them filed a writ petition against the illegal closure of the Institute, the basic question remains as to whether De will be able to bring an atmosphere of trust and confidence into the Institute after his high-handed tackling of the students.

For instance 25 per cent of the Institute's budget is spent on construction activity and this in the past has allegedly provided tremendous scope for corruption. Citing a celebrated case of corruption the student, say in 1976, a student, Subir Mazumdar, had alleged in a letter to *Technik* that a sum of Rs 125 claimed as luggage charges by Mr V. Shanmughan, Lecturer, physical education, was never in fact spent since students carried their own luggage. Mazumdar was called by Director De and President Dr H. H. Mathur and threatened with expulsion from the Institute if he did not withdraw the charges. *Technik* was censored before circulation and the letter was removed. In November 1978 when an enquiry committee was constituted to investigate the state of the gymkhana finances, two members of the committee were threatened by the Director who said: "Be careful that what you do does not boomarang on you". On February 24, 1979, the inquiry committee presented its report on the financial irregularities in the students gymkhana and among other things it was found that as on March 31, 1977, Rs 1,14,277 was outstanding. Other findings included embezzlement of funds and manipulation in settlement of advances.

The authorities refused to do anything about these findings and in

April instead of looking into the matter seven students, three of them inquiry committee members and five editors of *Technik*, were threatened with legal action for defamation. 1,800 students then signed a demand charter containing three recommendations including suspension of Mr Shanmughan pending the report, of an inquiry committee. The Director appointed his own man as head of a committee, Prof Hira Lal, but the students objected as he was recently removed by a no-confidence motion by the faculty members as Head of the Chemistry Department since he was found guilty of financial impropriety. A ministerial inquiry committee was formed headed by Mr R. N. P. Sinha and after that yet another committee was appointed with Dy. Director R. E. Bedford as convenor. Shanmughan has merely been transferred to the Centre for studies in Resources Engineering though the IIT act invests with the Director the responsibility for proper maintenance of Institute funds, and gives him the power to take action against proven embezzlement.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are allegedly even bigger malpractices like the guest house con-

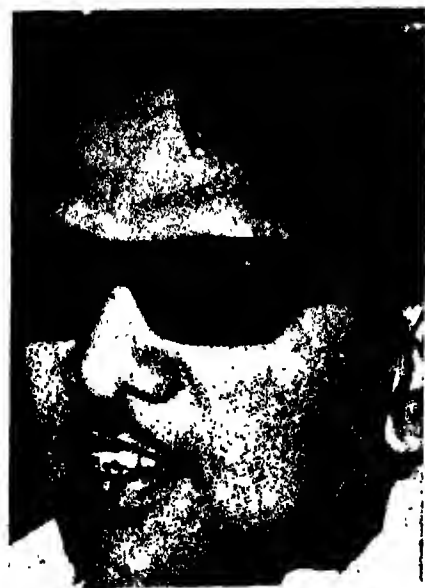
struction at the cost of Rs 45 lakhs to house 35 people. At a meeting of the Board of Governors on 26.6.70 administrative approval was accorded for the estimate of construction of the new guest house at a cost of Rs 6,31,000. On 7.9.73 this figure was doubled to Rs 13,80,665 and on 11.7.75 this went up with additional expenditure to Rs 23,00,000. On 5.3.78 approval was given for four airconditioners costing Rs 31,228 exclusive of taxes. And on 26.11.76 furniture and fixtures got Rs 1,77,990 and kitchen equipment Rs 60,727. And if this was not enough one new conference-cum-instruction hall was constructed at a cost of Rs 1,50,000 when the Institute already has five-six halls. So the new guest house costs Rs 45 lakhs.

Against this background of mutual suspicion and distrust it would be high-handed on the part of the Director to victimise the students. On the other hand a policy of understanding and give and take on either side would restore peace and normalcy in what is said to be one of the very prestigious institutes of learning and research.

OLGA TELLIS, Bombay

Congress (I) an equal partner

Tamil Nadu has come full circle since 1967



Karunanidhi

IT IS a measure of the reemergence of nationalist forces after more than a decade in Tamil Nadu that the younger members of the Congress(I) were busy in late March sending SOS messages to New Delhi, requesting Mrs Gandhi to withdraw from the front so that the Congress (I) could go it alone. "Our morale is very high", said a young Congress (I)

leader. "And we should seize this moment to avenge the humiliation our Party suffered at the hands of the DMK in '67". But Delhi feels that the Tamil Nadu Congress (I) is not yet strong enough to contest independently, and so on April 2, came the announcement that the DMK and Congress (I) will share 218 seats equally, and the Muslim League and a few other minor Parties will contest 18 seats in the coming Assembly elections. "This understanding won't last", said MGR, "Sooner or later, Karunanidhi will resent the Congress (I) blind on the language issue". Wall posters have already appeared in several parts of the state calling Karunanidhi the betrayer of the Dravidian movement. Some of them show Karunanidhi shouting, "Bharat Mata ki jal, Indira Mata sindabad", etc. Complained a well-known journalist, who wanted to remain anonymous: "When MGR could woo Mrs Gandhi there was no talk of any danger to the Dravidian culture and movement, but when DMK made an alliance with her, suddenly parochial paranoia is created".

Corruption charges are hurled all around, and right now it is the DMK who is finding it easier to do so. At least five colleagues of MGR, all senior Ministers in his Cabinet, have quit, and some have already joined the DMK. Their tirade against MGR may not be very convincing to the intelligent voter but the DMK-

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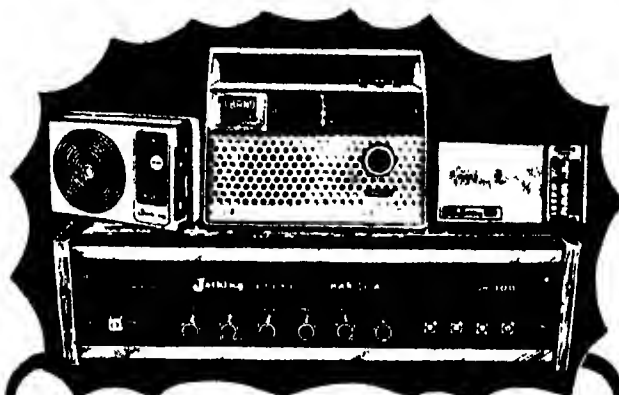
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sponsored Press is highlighting all these remarks against MGR day after day. This has certainly created a feeling of greater insecurity in MGR's camp. For one thing, the actor-politician is getting bogged down by income-tax problems once again. Secondly his allies, the two Communist Parties and the Janata, have been giving him too many heartaches. At one point the Janata wanted to contest 60 seats, the Marxists 50 and the CPI 30. However by April 6, MGR had made it very clear to them that his own Party would contest two-thirds of the seats, the rest could be shared between the other partners in the alliance.

Regionalism is not being given much boost in this particular election as the DMK is in league with a national Party—the Congress (I)—and MGR is acting in collusion with the Communists and Janata who also claim to be "national Parties". It is interesting to note that Karunanidhi has not criticised the Karnataka CM Gundu Rao's 'jobs for the sons of the soil policy'. Whereas in 1971 when the Shiv Sena proposed such a solution in Maharashtra and launched attacks on the Tamilians and South

Indian population, Karunanidhi had air-dashed to Bombay to offer his sympathies and moral support to his people.

There was a fleeting feeling among the younger and more militant DMK leaders that the Party should also go it alone and try to form a separate Dravidian Government on its own. Since a large number of MGR's men, including the ex-Finance Minister, K. Manoharan, and Food Minister, Edmund, have joined the DMK, this notion was strengthened but Karunanidhi was not interested in encouraging such thoughts—not at this juncture at least. He is fully aware that if the DMK does not stick to the Congress (I) his arch-rival MGR will not hesitate to make peace with Mrs Gandhi. In fact, MGR has advised his partymen not to pass any harsh comments on Mrs Gandhi. "She is a rare national leader and we were allies till the other day and it was the AIADMK which gave her protection when the DMK staged a violent attack on her during her visit to Tamil Nadu in '77 and we hope she remembers it at least", says MGR.

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

Sold and married

They called one of the racketeers 'Babu Shadiwala'

ARE women saleable creatures? The recent busting of an alleged gang of traffickers by the Crime Branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Police reveals that there are people who feel so! The police have so far arrested five persons including a middle-aged woman named Maltu of 24 Parganas, West Bengal. The other arrested persons are: Maharaj Bahadur Saxena of Darel Ganj, Shahjampur in Uttar Pradesh; his son, Virender Kumar Saxena alias Viroo; Lekh Raj of Biharipur Hira in Pileebhit, UP and Dewan Chand of Nandpur village in Jammu district.

Some members of the alleged gang including a woman, Sadhna, of Calcutta are still at large and have been declared absconders. The police have traced 20 girls so far. Five of them are said to be below 18 years of age and they have been termed as "minor" which makes the offence against the accused persons more serious. The details about the trade of the girls given by the police are quite revealing and indicate social problems.

According to Deputy Inspector General of the State Police, Crime and Railways, Mr. M. M. Khajuria, the sale of Bengali and Bihari girls in Jammu areas started about 13 years back. It began with the visit of Dewan Chand of Nandpur village to Gaya in Bihar in 1967. Dewan Chand had gone to Gaya for *Pinddan* of his wife who had died. After performing the religious rites when Dewan Chand was weeping, some persons came to him with a suggestion that he should get married once again. They could arrange a girl for him for



The accused and the police

Rs 1,000. He went back to his village and after procuring Rs 1,000 came to Gaya. He was sold a Bihari girl named Janki there. According to police investigations some documents were also prepared indicating the marriage of Dewan Chand and his connection with the traffickers. After some time Dewan Chand thought of his two unmarried brothers. A sum of Rs 2,000 was arranged for them. He went to Gaya where he got two more girls.

In certain villages of Jammu there still exists the old system of marriage by exchange of girls between different families. The system is known as

Doheri. For those families which have no girls, it is difficult to get brides for their boys. When such unmarried people in and around Nandpur came to know about the second marriage of Dewan Chand and also the marriage of his two brothers, they started taking an interest in him. Thus, Dewan Chand got involved in trade of women and became an agent of the traffickers in the Jammu area. Young girls from West Bengal and Bihar were brought to be sold in the State.

Mr. Khajuria told this correspondent that the State police got the clue about the sale of girls in Jammu area when in July 1979 a Bengali girl named Lakshmi was seen moving in the company of an army man on Jammu railway station. When some policemen questioned her, she revealed how she was brought to Jammu area by some people and sold to a person in the border area of Ranbirsinghpura. She had secretly fled away from the man's house because he did not treat her well. Following this statement the police started the probe and then raided the house of Dewan Chand from where some letters were seized. These gave the information regarding his link with Maharaj Bahadur Saxena and others.

Mr. M. L. Sharma, an inspector in the Crime Branch, who headed the investigations and had visited a number of places in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal to arrest the accused, has given quite a thrilling and sensational account about the police's efforts in arresting Maharaj Bahadur Saxena, who was known in Darel Ganj area as Babu Shadiwala, his son Viroo and other. According to Mr. Sharma it took the police several days to locate the whereabouts of Babu Shadiwala in Shahjampur as Dewan Chand had never visited his house but knew him only by night as Shadiwala. The DIG police said that the letters recovered from Dewan Chand's house indicate that code words were used in their correspondence by the traffickers. The word "box" was used for a girl. After the arrest of Saxena the police party took him to Calcutta to search his other associates including Maltu and others. Mr. Sharma narrated how he and other policemen had to work in different guises in Calcutta to locate Maltu, Viroo and Sadhna. Cases have been registered against the accused under Section 363 (kidnapping), 366 (abduction), 366-B (to conspire to commit these offences), 120-B (importing into the State for sexual relationship) and 102 (abettment) of Jammu Kashmir Ranbir Penal Code.

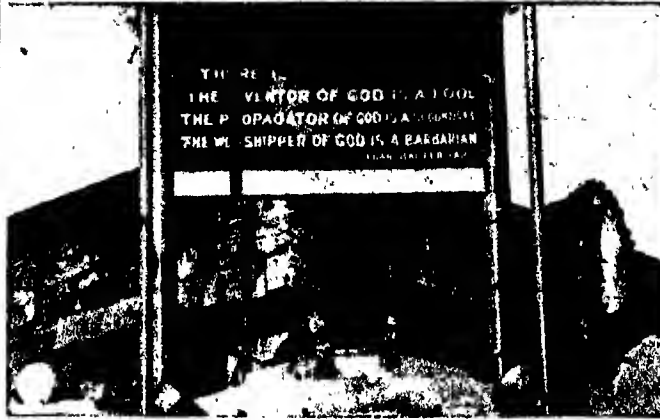
Notwithstanding the provisions of the law there are people who are of the view that most of the girls come from very poor families. They should be settled in life instead of being exploited in brothels. The DIG disclosed that police have not been able to locate the parents of many of the girls who have been recovered because they come from poor nomadic families.

GOPAL SACHAR, Srinagar

LIVING

Bust or bust

The bust of EVR (E. V. Ramasamy Naicker) made a sudden, unobtrusive appearance in the temple town of Kanchipuram, on a controversial site barely 100 yards away from the Sankara mutt. Actually, the statue, which cost Rs 3,700, was ready as long ago as 1974. It was not installed as permission to set it up was first denied during the Emergency, while later the MGR Government directed that another site be chosen. During a heated debate in the Assembly, the DMK boss chided MGR for not honouring EVR, the father of the Dravidian movement, and swore that he would see to it that the statue would



The controversial EVR statuette at Kanchipuram

come up at the original site. The threat in turn so upset the AIADMK members that they retaliated by threatening to pull the statue down. Recently, Justice S. Mohan of the Madras High Court declared that the Government had no business to prohibit the erection of the statue. So before a writ petition came up against the judgement the sixty-year-old statue was installed. But the most intriguing part of the whole affair is the inscription which reads: "There is no God/There is no God/There is no God at all/The inventor of God is a fool/The propagator of God is a scoundrel/The worshipper of God is a barbarian".

Miss Hit



Madhumita Goswami

She is only 15 years old, a class ten student who is also employed with the South-eastern Railway. Madhumita Goswami hit the headlines very recently, when she became the first woman from Bengal to find a place in the National Badminton team. She caused quite a flutter when she defeated the National champion Kaniwal Thakur Singh and then ousted India's no. 2—Huffish Nariman — at the selection trials at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala. Madhumita will be part of the contingent to the World Cup Badminton Tournament to be held at Djakarta from May 26 onwards, but success has not gone to her head. When Shishir Gupta spoke to her, he got the impression of a girl who was not only overwhelmed with joy at her victories, but who was determined to scale new heights in time to come. In the meanwhile she sees a great deal of Hindi movies and her favourite hero is—you've guessed it — Amitabh Bachchan.

Huppertmost in their minds

Is it possible that a hit film can so frustrate an audience that most people walk out of the auditorium 20 minutes before it ends? Not one day, not two days, but every day. Yes, it is possible indeed, reports Arthur Pais, in the case of the FFC release, *The Lacemaker*. The movie, which opened recently in Madras, attracted a great deal of attention. According to the grapevine, the film had escaped the censors' scissors and all seven (albeit fleeting) nude scenes were complete. Well, those who saw the movie at Filmotsav '78 know for sure that the film has indeed been censored. One scene to suffer was a frontal view of Isabelle Huppert, unhampered by any clothes whatsoever, and there must surely have been others too. The remaining nude scenes, however, did nothing to keep

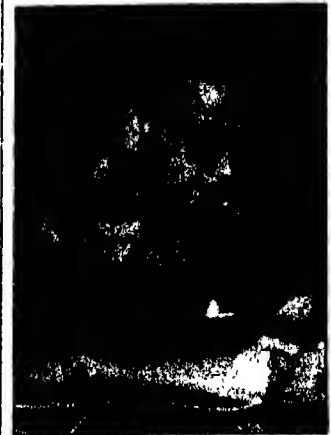
Madras audiences happy, with a lot of people trying to get out before the end. There were a lot of others who said the nude scenes were fine by them, which led to acrimonious debates. This award-winning Swiss film is a sensitive tale of a tragic love affair between two socially incompatible people, but audiences in the city had no time for the subtle nuances of Goretta. In between nude scenes they would bang on the floor or sing boisterous songs from Tamil films. Then there was the scene which drew gales of laughter with every show. The heroine begins eating a green mango soon after sexual intercourse and the audience, without fail, would rick with mirth. The reason: the mango in Tamil films is symbolic of pregnancy. That, they figured, was fast work indeed.

JU-venile pairs

When Calcutta's Jadavpur University (locally known as JU) was taken over by the West Bengal state Government a few months ago, the occasion passed by almost as a non-event. But by way of contrast the university's annual cultural festival "Sanskriti 80" celebrated from March 27 to March 31, seems to have evoked much more interest. Everyone relished the idea of five days

of fun and frolic, reports Manjira Majumdar and the crowds never thinned. As an active students' union spokesman commented, "College festivals should go beyond providing boys and girls an opportunity to interact intimately". All said and done, however, what participants will find it hardest to forget is the comprehensive list of who was paired off with whom.

Bathed in nobility



P. C. Sethi

Want to take a holy dip? Please ensure that you are travelling in the right lane. Yes, there will be separate areas for males and females on the banks of the Shipra river to ensure that women bathers get their fair share of privacy. In addition, there has been a proposal for a number of enclosed cabins near the common ghats where women can change in peace. These steps follow suggestions by the Union Works and Housing Minister, P. C. Sethi, who decided to help out after he himself went for a dip at Ram Ghat and noticed the women being ogled. The interesting thing is that his suggestions appear to be bearing fruit, despite several cries of "spoilsport" and "killjoy".

BARC is worse than its bite



There are plenty of them, all over Bombay. The little bohemian spots where high society turns up regularly and relaxes in unhurried comfort over beer or exotic dishes. There's Samovar, for instance, attached to the Jehangir Art Gallery: that's the artists' hangout, where you don't really mind tripping over someone else's legs in the narrow aisle (besides, it would be terribly infra dig to swear). Then there is the Alps, in Colaba, which also has a pretty high percentage of attendance. The third is the Victory Stall, run by the Time and Talents Club and situated on the Gateway of India waterfront. But time is running out for

the Victory Stall, which faces closure after 18 years of existence. The land on which it stands belongs to the Bhabha Atomic Research Commission (BARC), which plans to use it in order to expand. Legend has it that the land, which was first made available to the Time and Talents Club by Homi Bhabha, was not barricaded from the New Yacht Club that houses the BARC offices, and the great man himself used to slip out every so often for a quiet cup of tea and perhaps the occasional beer. Things have not changed much since then, adds Ashish Rajadhyaksha. The tables one rests one's elbows on are the same ones installed

when the place opened, and it is rare to find a chair that houses a perfect cane mesh. The Victory Stall, which has always been run as a charitable organisation with all the proceeds going to the Jawans' Welfare Fund, will soon be moved to the National Centre for Performing Arts compound. Timings will be from 10 to 6.30 to cater to office-going crowds, but prices will be hiked and the famous menu of dhansag on Thursdays and chicken-in-the-basket on Wednesdays, will be scrapped in favour of something more up-to-date.

And of course, there will be no waterfront to gaze out on while eating.

Fag end

Veteran smokers had to find other things to do. They munched sweets, they bit their fingernails and they chewed gum. Sometimes they just sat around moodily but there was nothing they could do to replenish their dwindling supply of cigarettes. When Bombay's 14,250 cigarette retailers — every single one of them — went on strike in the first week of April, they weren't pulling an April Fool's prank.

For smokers, it was agony. To say the least. There were serpentine queues in front of the railway stations that had kiosks, while Wills Filter was only to be had by the divinely lucky. The price varied, and packets would be passed under the counter for between Rs four or five.

It is an old issue, says Ashish Rajadhyaksha. Cigarette manufacturers hiked their prices three times in the last month alone, although the dealers' cut remained at 8 per cent. According to the Bombay Bidi Tamhaku Vyapari Sangh, this is "even less than the percentage claimed by lottery ticket sellers". They are holding out for a 15 per cent cut and claim that not a cigarette will be sold till their figure is accepted. By way of retaliation, manufacturers accuse the retailers of profiteering.

Meanwhile, the wrangle continues and tempers continue to fray, with smokers unable to reconcile to their fate. More important, however, Bombay air is becoming breathable again.

Tour de force

To Allan Fernandes, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Oberoi Hotels International, went another Jaurel this year. He was recently awarded the prestigious Travel Press Trophy, which is presented every year to people whose contribution to world tourism has been outstanding. Last year's trophy was awarded to the Minister of Tourism of Barbados and earlier to the chairman of KLM, so it seems as though Mr Fernandes is certainly in exalted company. And with good reason. Mr Fernandes has represented India at a number of international tourism conferences and has been a guest lecturer on tourism promotion and communications at the Indian Institute of Mass Communications.



Giuliano Laudi (left) presents the trophy to Allan Fernandes

Hails tax

So what's new in Ludhiana? Hawking taxes, that's what. According to S. K. Sud, sources in the corporation reveal that the new tax is being imposed in consultation with and on the suggestion of the Punjab Government. And, to all intents and purposes, it will apply to all hawkers within the corporation limits, who will be charged Rs 40 per annum, no matter what their wares are. This tax will affect about 40,000 hawkers in the city. That's a lot of voices raised in protest. Come to think of it, they should be able to notch up quite a few 'ecibels.

THE WORLD

Running for Presidency



One contender for the American Presidency who seems to be running out of both time and breath in the race is George Bush, the CIA ex-chief. Mr Bush has

made his fondness for jogging a trifle too obvious: wherever his campaign entourage settle for the night, they can be sure to see their hero in the morning, jogging along roads, towpaths and fields, puffing and throwing back his hair for tele-genic effect — TV cameras apparently follow him. The run to the Presidency remains, however, difficult. Mr Bush is competing with Ronald Reagan for the Republican candidature, and doesn't seem very hopeful of getting very far. Though he won against the latter in his state of birth, Connecticut, Mr Bush had captured only 68 delegates as against Reagan's 300. To secure the nomination, 998 are needed. Mr Bush, 55, is depending for success on his record as CIA director, envoy to Peking and the UN and the slogan: "The president who won't have to learn."

Dis-United Kingdom

British marriages are increasingly ending on rocks, and in most cases they involve disputes over children. British divorces have soared from 25,000 decrees made absolute in 1961 to 119,000 in 1972 — after divorce reform — to 143,000 in 1978. While unopposed divorces can be obtained even by post, cases involving disputes over money and children are piling up before law courts, and are fast proving difficult to cope with. The British Law Commission has now decided to consider seriously one of the major post-divorce problems — alimony and other financial provisions made for support of the wife. The wife's right to alimony is now archaic due to strains on remarried men.

Served on a platter

It's simple. All you have to do is choose your food, and you will be rewarded with a boy or a girl. According to three researchers in Paris and Montreal, Canada, a couple could choose the sex of their child by simply changing the menu of the mother-to-be. Professor Joseph Stolkovsky of Paris University along with Dr Henrion and Dr Papa of the Port Royale Maternity Hospital carried out detailed experiments and have come up with some savoury delights. Sugar and spice would not produce a baby girl, but a boy. If a mother wants a girl she would have to eat a lot of eggs and meat without salt. Other foods forbidden for mothers if they want a daughter are tea, coffee, ham and sausages. For a boy, food

with lots of salt, tea, coffee, meat, bread, vegetables and fruits are required. Milk, cheese, eggs and pastries are taboo. And for those with a sweet tooth the researchers have said that sugar and honey were alright for mothers who want either a boy or a girl. The theory of the researchers is based on the belief that the "Y" spermatozoa needed to produce males are found in foods containing large amounts of potassium while the "X" spermatozoa required for girls are found in foods rich in calcium and magnesium. The three-member team has had a success-rate of 81 per cent. Professor Stolkovsky has claimed of only six failures among the 38 women he has conducted his experiments on in Paris.

This'll give you 'booze flesh'

You got something needs watching? Hire a flock of geese. In Dumbarton, Scotland, a flock of geese has been guarding \$600 million worth of Scotch whisky stored in godowns. And the 80-strong flock of feathered sleuths are good. They have been at the job for the last 20 years for the company of Hiram Walker, part of the Canadian based firm which

produces Canadian Club and Ballantine's whisky. The management of the company is quite liberal towards the flock — their wings are not clipped. And any time they feel they can start flapping their wings and fly away. Hiram Walker are proud of their super sleuths. Reason: they have not lost a drop of the precious liquid in the last 20 years.



Wanted for life

Desmond O'Hare, a terrorist gunman, was once regarded as the most wanted man in Ireland. But Claire Doyle, a shop assistant from the border town of Castleblaney, apparently wants him much more than anyone else. The two were married recently in the Irish Republic's Portlaoi-

se Prison, where the groom is still in the process of serving a nine-year sentence. Mr. O'Hare, 21, is claimed as a member of the Irish National Liberation Army. Last November, he was jailed at Dublin Special Criminal Court. Needless to say, this was one couple that didn't go on a honeymoon.

Tense about the future

"Prepare yourselves for the worst", says a group of forecasters in a book entitled *Future Tense*, published recently. The predictions are based on the Trend Analysis by Relative Opinion Testing (TAROT) system perfected by Mr Francis Kinsman, a forecasting consultant. The predictions range from economics to politics and even climatic changes. This is because of the unusual composition of the 15-member forecasting group. According to Kinsman, the group was comprised of people who were "all eminent in one or more of a number of prophetic disciplines — astrologers, numerologists, trance mediums, clairvoyants, spirit writers and sensitives of various kinds". Mr Kinsman is supposed to have interviewed each member of his group thoroughly and then put their views together to form some sort of a joint statement.

Here is a sample of what they have forecast: Inflation will reach "hurricane proportions" and the world currency system will collapse in 1982. During March, July and October 1982, the planets will come together and this will result in earthquakes and tidal waves which will be experienced in all parts of the world. Mrs Thatcher, the British Prime Minister will lose her job. However, that will not be for long since she will be recalled to power after a "de Gaulle-like period of exile". Queen Elizabeth will abdicate in favour of her son, Prince Charles, around 1985. The most important year seems to be 1982 due to the economic crash. This will be brought about faster by the assassination of President Sadat of Egypt followed by a war in the Middle East in which Israel will be betrayed by the USA. The once-powerful Shah of Iran will also be assassinated by one of his own staff. There will be a short war in the late 1980s or early 1990 in which the adversaries will be Russia, on one side and China and Japan on the other. For India, there is hope, at least politically; a "young and Western-educated" man might emerge as leader.

The Palestinians have found a supporter for their cause, albeit an unsuccessful one. This time it is not a politician or another world leader but a film actress—Vanessa Redgrave. Recently, she along with her brother, Corin, put up a motion in the actors' union, Equity, for a ban on its members from working in Israel, and on the sale of films and TV films to that country. It was signed by 31 members. In her speech to the union members during a recent meeting she defended the rights of artistes everywhere in the world. The boycott call was given because according to her the rights of the Palestinian artistes were inseparable from the rights of the Palestinian people. She believed that the motion brought by her was within the union of artistes' rights. The motion was supported by those

Red and grave



Vanessa Redgrave

who were accusing Israel of being a racist state. Actor Tom Kempinski seconding Miss Redgrave's motion said he was proud to be a Jew and a communist, al-

though he had lost a number of relatives in Nazi gas chambers.

The Equity meeting was dominated by the Leftists and they ensured that other motions were withdrawn so that Miss Redgrave's motion could be debated. In spite of that, the Left could not mobilise a majority of the votes. So the motion was defeated by 90 votes to 88 when the crunch came. Said Peter Plouviez, general secretary of the union of which there are 26,000 members: "The margins by which the motion was defeated is not indicative of the division of opinion of the members of Equity on this issue. I would not have thought it would be as close as that". Many members did not attend the meeting but they would probably have voted against the motion, according to Peter Plouviez.

Man who won the race



Jesse Owens

Jesse Owens, who dared to infuriate Hitler when both were at the height of their success, died on March 31, 1980 leaving behind him 66 years of memories. Born James Cleveland Owens, which was contracted to Jesse, he achieved in the space of a mere 45 minutes something which has as yet remained unequalled: He broke six world records on May 25, 1935 during the Berlin Olympic Games. He won four gold medals for running in the 100 metres, the 200 metres, the long jump and for taking part in the American team which won the 200 metres relay. What perhaps roused Hitler's fury was when he saw

the black Owens, a member of an inferior race, lying on the grass beside the fair-skinned Aryan and Owens' long jump rival, Lutz Long. Owens' grace and speed, which he superbly maintained, were what won him the controversial honours. He proved under Hitler's nose how wrong he was about "racial superiority". Now, as the Moscow Games draw closer, with half the world's governments thinking of boycotting them, politics has once again been dragged into sport. But journalists will not be able to meet and ask the great athlete if the Russian propaganda could equal what he experienced at Berlin.

Taking off

Apart from words and smiles, airlines stewardesses are finding other ways of pleasing passengers on flights: Stewardesses from three major airlines, Trans World, Delta and World Airways have been posing in the nude for *Playboy* magazine. When the directors and lawyers of the airlines received their advance copies, they did not like what they saw, at least officially. The airlines have thus decided to bring disciplinary action against the errant stewardesses. But the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants, have been more businesslike in their approach. When TWA advised Miss Nancy Nachtigal that it was investigating about her appearance in *Playboy*, she contacted her union lawyer. According to the lawyer there was a streak of hypocrisy in the airline's stand and that the union would fight for Miss Nachtigal. The stewardess had been handed a letter which said that her appearance was a "public abuse of the company's image". To this Nancy said that she had not harmed the company in any way and furthermore had posed in her own time. Other stewardesses are Linda Lehner from Delta Airways and Lindsey Rimmell from World.

KHAAS BAAT

THE latest craze for piercing one's ears has caught on among Bombay's film girls. The "in" thing now is to wear more than one ring or eartop. Some of our younger actresses have got themselves two little extra rings like the village-belles; the only difference is their rings are made of platinum and studded with nothing less than diamonds. So from Simple to Reena and Rekha, everyone is doing this very "in" thing. Vivacious Dimple accompanied an excited Simple to get their ears "done" and came home with her tiny, pink, shell-like ears with just one extra ring in them, and hubby Rajesh Khanna blew a big fuse: He stormed at her saying such fashions made a lady look cheap and she better take the rings off immediately: Dimple meekly took them off—she is also banned from wearing nose-rings for the same reason. Going by such

Rekha:
A Lucknawi charm



Vinod: The shareef-badmash



Komilla: Gabbar ki pasand?



standards, what would one call Reena Roy who had both her ears punctured with holes along the outlines. She now wears all sorts of earrings and eartops. The older set is yet to go in for this new craze!

NOW they are nicknaming Vinod Mehra a 'shareef-badmash' for doing what he did to his sweet smiling wife Meena and seeking bliss in the arms of Bindiya Goswami. "He always sounded and behaved too good to be true", said an actor's wife who knew Vinod through her husband. Which shows that once you are in films you must show a bit of crookedness or else they won't trust you when your true colours come out. And that reminds me. If one cannot trust Vinod, can one believe Bindiya who says she is 18 (just turned 18, if you please) and looks ten years older?

THOSE wild rumours spun mostly by Komilla Wark about Amjad Khan and herself, can best be dismissed as self-elevating fantasies. She used to hang around his sets while he directed Adhura Aadmi and would refuse to go home even when he was shooting till late at night. And he is too polite a man to ask a lady

to leave his sets, especially when she cooes and mews about how she loved watching him at work. In an attempt to get her name mentioned in print, Komilla turned an absolutely one-sided effort on her part into a two-sided love-story. This fantasy should fade off in the face of reality: Amjad Khan's family!

MUMTAZ is giving interviews and meeting the right people in Bombay's filmworld like an aspiring newcomer. But in spite of this and more, she doesn't let anyone forget she is The Great Mumtaz, who had given up everything at her peak. That's all very well and to a heroine-starved film industry she is most welcome. But must Mumtaz tell everyone she meets how expensive her bangles are (diamond bracelets for everyday wear) and how the jeweller, a top-bracket name today, cannot make the same pair for anyone else but her? The height of it all was when she boasted to a friend, another ex-star, that she can get her (the other ex-star) a role from a top producer-director for 15 lakhs. And then snidely added that the same man had been pursuing her to act in his film for a fee of 25 lakhs.

R. Upadhyay

Chiranjeev Ghosh

R. Upadhyay

KHAAS BAAT

SHE should be spending more time in Bombay following the incredible success of her maiden Hindi film *Sargam* but Jayapradha is seen more in Hyderabad and Madras studios. Recently one saw her in Madras enacting one of those coy, nuptial songs under the supervision of her favourite director Dasari Narayana Rao. Clad in white, she did look ravishing, and exuded more poise than before. The film, *Seetha Ramula* (hero Krishnam Raju) is considered one of her potential hits. Why didn't Jayapradha click in Bombay? Was it because her second film *Lok Parlok* was a flop? After all *Jeeendra* too was cast in the film, and her role was rather limited. Jayapradha believes that if she hadn't begun her career in Andhra, and if she did many assignments, she could have accepted more Hindi films. Offers there were plenty, she says, but the producers weren't willing to come down to Madras and shoot the films, and she couldn't give up her 20 half-completed Telugu films. Something like this happened to Lakshmi after the release of *Julie*, though some people believe that she offended the producers by her haughty nature.

Kamalahasan and Meera in a typical Malayalam potboiler



DID I think that Mu Ka Muthu, Karunanidhi's son, gave up his acting career after all his six films flopped between 1973 and 1976? Well, after hibernating and being arrested on drunken charges for a couple of times, he's bidding to come back via guest roles. He's featured in a Tamil film starring Jai Shankar and Sri Vidya and directed by T. R. Ranianna.

DEEPA was a bit disappointed that her foray into Kannada films wasn't all that successful, and to make things worse she couldn't capitalise on the success of *Amar Deep* her first-ever Hindi film. (Though Deepa played a "sympathetic" role in the film, one thought that the emphasis was on her boobs and thighs. And then one guesses Bindu is still going strong in Bombay).

Deepa however has any number of medium-budget Tamil films to keep her busy for the next two years. And she continues to be one of the popular Malayalam artistes too. In Madras, director Kaja seems to have a fondness for her: he's directing her in four films including *Kathal Kathal Kathal* in which she is cast opposite Vijayan.



Ponni in "Shoolam", a Tamil film

BALU MAHENDRA succeeded in portraying his favourite heroine, Shoba as a very pretty gal in *Ashlatha Kolangal* but then Shoba's reputation was hardly at stake in this film at least. She was quite impressive in *Ashlatha*, but her greatest performance was as a slum dweller in *Past*. In *Past* she was seen with hardly any make-up and she was still stunning. This year will probably go down as the most eventful year in her life. Apart from the personal decision she took to "marry" Balu Mahendra, and walked out on her mother, she also accepted a number of assignments, throwing caution to the winds.

ZARINA WAHAB wants Malayalam filmmakers to know that she'll accept some "good" assignments provided the "banner is good". She also attaches great importance to being paired with Kamalahasan. They were in terrific form in N. Sankaran Nair's *Madanatosavam*, the desi version of *Love Story*. Now, Zarina is also acting in a film being directed by Bharatan. Well, if you remember Bharatan's previous films, *Thakara* and *Rathi Nirvedham*, please don't expect titillation, courtesy Zarina. She can be very exciting when she chooses but normally she is staid.

PIOUSJI

this india

prize is 30 for the entry given first

without comment



JAISALMER: Deoda village is unique in one respect—it has not received a bridegroom's party for several years. Proud Bhati Rajput, who comprise about 85 per cent of the village, consider bowing before their bridegrooms a humiliating practice. Till 10 to 15 years ago, the Rajputs even referred doing away with their female offspring to avoid the ignominy, villagers told visiting reporters. The situation has undergone a change now and a "baraat" is expected to arrive at the village in another five years—*The Statesman* (Pradip Kumar Datta, Calcutta)

BANGALORE: Two years ago, they lost an Ambassador car. Two months ago it was two typewriters. But they are guardians of the law, meant to protect people's life and property. The corps of Detectives finds itself in an unenviable position of having to explain away the thefts and report no progress in finding the missing articles and nabbing the culprits. At the press conference on March 31, Mr H. Veerabhadraiah, IG and Mr Vijayadevaraj Urs, Special IGP said the article in question had not been recovered till late. But if this can happen to the guardians of law, what about the man in the street?—*Deccan Herald* (M. R. V. Prasad, Bangalore)

INDORE: Butlers and washermen still do not serve Harijans in rural Madhya Pradesh for fear of social boycott by non-Harijans, according to a survey of 141 villagers conducted by an Indore-based social organisation. Tea shops were barred to Harijans at least in two villages and temples out of bounds for them in 56 villages, the survey pointed out. The survey was conducted by 35 workers of the Madhya Pradesh Harijan Sewak Sangh, who contacted more than 31,000 Harijans during an 18-day padayatra of Rajnandgaon, Ujjain and Ohhatarpur districts in October—*Times of India* (Narendra Chauhan, Raipur)

GORAKHPUR: Who is mightier, a policeman or a homeguard? In a complaint lodged with the Cantonment

police it has been alleged by Mr Ishwar Dayal Ojha, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, that while he was on a tour of his circle, a Platoon Commander of Homeguards accompanied by his staff broke open the lock of one of his rooms, removed his articles and forcibly occupied it on March 23. Cantonment police are investigating but no action has been taken so far to the utter bewilderment of the police officer who himself claims to have been a victim of police 'zulum', for the suspects the hand of Cantonment police behind the episode—*Northern India Patrika* (Rajneesh Batra, Allahabad)

HYDERABAD: The Andhra Pradesh Minister for Endowments, Mr P. V. Chowdhary, assured the Vidhan Sabha that the quality of 'laddus' being distributed at the famous Tirupati temple as 'prasad' would be improved. Replying to the debate on budgetary demands for his department, he said there was no scope of reducing the price, in view of the high cost of ghee and sugar. Earlier in the debate, Mr K. V. Pathy (Congress-I) complained that the 'laddus' could hardly be preserved for two days, whereas previously they used to be fresh and new even after 15 days—*Times of India* (Mahendra S. Bindhu, Ujjain)

BELGAUM: To their amusement, eighth standard Marathi students appearing for their annual examination found the names of a cine artiste and a Hindi film in the Biology question paper set by the Board of Headmasters Beigaum. The teacher, who had set the questions for the Board seems an ardent cine fan. Ignoring the usual practice of indicating sub-questions with either numbers or letters, the sub-divisions were shown by 'he', 'ma', 'ma', 'la', and 'ni' and another four sub-questions with 'sa', 'ra', 'ga'. Invigilators were baffled when students brought this to their notice—*The Hindu* (R. Narayanan, Bangalore)

A MUSLIM has been appointed headmaster of a Sanskrit school for the first time in Karnataka. The appointment of Mr Mohammed Ghous Ali Baksh of Sri Jagadguru Sivacharya Sanskrit Pathshala has been approved by the Education Department—*Statesman* (M. S. Sriram, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI: Mr Ratansinh Rajda, a Janata member from Maharashtra urged the Prime Minister to take steps to stop "vested interests" from exploiting her name and her office for selfish ends. Making a special mention in the Lok Sabha, Mr Rajda said a liquor vendor at Ulhasnagar, Bombay, had given an advertisement in a local daily congratulating the people on Republic Day. In the advertisement, he had published a photograph of Mrs Gandhi along with his own—*Times of India* (Rita Jha, Bombay)

I HAVE great affection for Mr Indira Gandhi and her family which is why many people are under the erroneous impression that I am a member of the Congress (I)—Dhirendra Brahmachari in *Surya*

MY system of working does not allow any political interference—P. S. Bhinder, Delhi's new Police Commissioner

I THINK it will be useful to compare from time to time the law and order situation in all the states, including centrally administered ones — Jyoti Basu in a letter to Mrs Indira Gandhi

JANATA did not fail as a Government. It failed only in its political behaviour, which we are now going to correct — Atal Behar Vajpayee after the formation of the Bhartiya Janata Party.

THE disintegration of the Janata Party has come much earlier than expected. I have my full sympathy for persons like Mr Chandrashekhar, Mr Jagjivan Ram, Mr Narain and others who are all good men — Zail Singh, Union Home Minister

I AM glad that the people taught the Janata Party a lesson by defeating it in the Lok Sabha elections—Morarji Deesai interviewed in the *Indian Express*

THE kisans (farmers) and communists cannot sit together—Charan Singh

I DO not go anywhere. They all come to me—Promode Dasgupta quoted in the *Statesman*

PEOPLE used to drive on the right side of the street during the day and the wrong side at night. Now it is the wrong side all the time — An Iranian taxi driver quoted in *Newsweek*

PERHAPS Americans are suffering merely the discomfort of joining the human race—*Time*

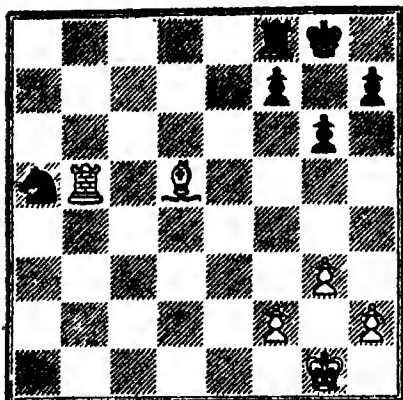
THIS so-called freedom of the Press has reached a state of such licence that virtually anything can be printed — Aga Khan on the western media

WHEN I do well, I'm a good actor. After 30 films when I'm nowhere, they tell me I can't act at all—Navin Nischal quoted in *Filmfare*

I'VE met Imran just a few times. He's very talented and very good looking. But I'm not looking for any involvement. Once bitten twice shy — Zeenat Aman in an interview in *Filmfare*

chess

Hodgson (Black)



Speelman (White) to move

Final position

Medium of the future

The second of August 1979 was an important day for chess and telecommunications, marking as it did the first ever live chess game to be transmitted on Ceefax, the BBC's new visual news and information service. Not many households at present have television equipped to receive Ceefax, so this historic event may well have passed you by unnoticed, but its implications should not be underestimated. Ceefax is tailor-made for transmitting chess news and games. Normal television is of course an equally good medium, but here the snag is to find sufficient available viewing time. Obviously the viewing public at large would not take too kindly to having their daily diet of 'Coronation Street' usurped by an analytical survey of the Queen's Gambit, but Ceefax does not run into this problem. It is rather like a video-newspaper with about 200 pages and one can switch from one page to another at will. This means that it can quite comfortably carry information on a wide variety of minority interests throughout the day, even in peak viewing time.

Over the next few years the number of sets equipped to receive Ceefax and its independent television counterpart Oracle will probably increase dramatically as the facility becomes cheaper, and this could prove a real bonus for chess enthusiasts. One could for example switch on to see live move-by-move accounts of World Championship matches, or major tournament games, results, news, or maybe even the latest opening ideas. Who knows? Chess on Ceefax at the moment is of course entirely experimental and its development will depend largely on audience response.

Meanwhile, the historic game:
White: J. Speelman. Black: J. Hodgson
Queen's Gambit, Tarrasch Defence. Ceefax 1979.

1. N-KB3, P-Q4; 2. P-QB4, P-K3; 3. P-KN3, P-QB4; 4. B-N2, N-QB3; 5. O-O, N-B3; 6. P-Q4, B-K2; 7. P x QP, KP x P; 8. P x P, O-O; 9. B-N5, B x P; 10. N-B3, P-Q5; 11. B x N, Q x B; 12. N-K4, Q-K2; 13. N x B, Q x N; 14. O-Q2, B-N5; 15. P-KR3, B-R4; The position is about level. Jonathan Speelman now embarks on an interesting plan to try to undermine Black's strong OP.
16. P-QN4? O-N3; 16... O x P; 17. Q x Q, N x Q; 18. N x P favours White.
17. QN-N1, P-QR3; 18. P-QR4, B x N; 19. B x B, N-K4; 20. B-N2, QR-Q1; 21.

KR-B1, P-QB7 Sharp play. Black fears a possible White build-up on the QB file starting with R-B5.

22. R-B3, P-QR4! 23. P x QP, P x P; 24. R(3)-N3, O-R2; 25. R x P, N x P; 26. R x P, Q x RP; Black has skillfully maintained the balance and the game should now be drawn.

27. R(7)-N5, KR-K1; 28. R-Q5, R x R; 29. B x R, N-B4; 30. R-QB1, Q-R6; 31. Q-B4, R-KB1; 32. R-K1, Q-R5? In mutual time pressure Black begins to go astray. White was threatening 33. Q x P + I R x Q; 34. R-K8 mate, but 32... N-K3 was a safe defence.

33. Q-O5, N-Q2; 34. B-B6, Q-R4; 35. R-QN1! N-N3; He could still hang on with 35... N-B3; 36. R-N8, Q-K8 + 37. K-N2, N-K1.

36. Q-B7, N-B5; 37. Q x Q, N x Q; 38. B-Q5! A quaint finish - the knight is lost. 38... P-N3; 39. R-N5 Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

ONE of the five Bols Brillancy Prizes at Lausanne went to the German player, von Gynz, for a defence he played against France. The deal contains other points of interest.

Dealer, West. N-S vulnerable.

♠ K 8			
♥ Q 8 2			
♦ 9 4 2			
♣ A J 8 5 2			
	N		♠ Q 9 6 4 3 2
♠ J 10 5	W	E	♥ 9 7 4 3
♥ 10 6 5			♦ Q 7
♦ K J 10 5 3	S		♣ 9
♣ 10 7			

Chemia, for France, played as South in Six Clubs. West led the Jack of spades, won in dummy. After his usual two-seconds thought Chemia played a diamond to the Ace, drew trumps, and eliminated the spades and hearts, finishing in hand. This left.

♠ 10			
♥ —			
♦ K J 10 5			
♣ —			
	N		♠ Q 9 6
♠ —	W	E	♥ 9
♥ —			♦ Q
♦ 8 6	S		♣ —
♣ 8 4 3			

When declarer led a diamond West played the 'Crocodile coup', opening his jaws to play the King and swallow his partner's Queen. If West fails to do this, then East is left on play.

Since the declarer would certainly not have led a diamond to the Ace early on if he had held A Q, the defence was clearly marked, though I agree that many players would have missed it. What else strikes you about the hand?

First, it was very smart play by Chemia to lead the diamond at once, before opponents were likely to think of unblocking.

Secondly, it would have been fine play by East to go up with the Queen on the diamond lead, preventing any possibility of a throw-in should declarer hold, say, A J x in diamonds. This play of the Queen from Q x can hardly lose when dummy has low cards.

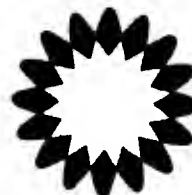
Thirdly, East missed another chance to dispose of ♠ Q when the second round of trumps was played.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



ONE of the longest and most attractive series of airmail stamps was issued in Uruguay in 1929. Reissued by Waterlow and Sons, London, all the stamps were in the same design, featuring Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology. The first issue comprised 17 values from 1 centesimo to 4 pesos but during the early 1930s the stamps were gradually reprinted in different colours and new values were added to the series. In 1935 the same design was used by a Montevideo printer for stamps in a reduced size, again with new values, so that a complete collection would number 56 stamps. Their prices now range from 20p for the commonest types to about £20 for some of the high values in mint condition. Particularly interesting are envelopes bearing the Pegasus stamps and flown on some of the pioneer international air services between Montevideo and other South American capitals or on the various flights made by the German Graf Zeppelin in South America during the 1930s.



THE leaves, flowers and fruit of woodland trees are featured on the four winter welfare stamps now on sale in West Germany. As usual, similar designs have been chosen for the West Berlin series. The set includes this 40 plus 20 pfennigs value showing the larch. German stamps beginning with those of the old States are listed, illustrated and priced in the new Stanley Gibbons 'Germany Stamp Catalogue' (244 pp., £4) issues of the Empire, the Third Reich, the Allied occupation zones, the Saar and Danzig are also covered. Among the early rarities are several from Bavaria and Saxony at over £2,000 each but even the West German winter welfare issues of the early 1950s are priced at between £30 and £80 per set. This catalogue is the first edition of the Germany section in the new Stanley Gibbons series, which will comprise 17 volumes covering the stamps of the world in 1979.

C. W. HILL

Beginning April 26

This week the Sun is in Aries, Venus is in Taurus, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn and Rahu are conjoined in Leo, Uranus and Neptune are in Scorpio, Ketu is in Aquarius and Mercury is in Pisces. The Moon will be moving through Cancer, Leo and Virgo from Gemini.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) This will mainly be a lucky week for you. There is a fair chance of promotion. Domestic affairs will bring a lot of happiness and joy. Publicity or social prominence will bring you gain, but in many cases also a little unpleasantness. You will gain through secret information or association. Business associates must be kept in good humour. Wait for important matters. Good dates: 20, 22, 23 and 26. Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5. Favourable direction: South.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) This will be a week of mixed fortunes. Apart from unexpected illness or disagreement with an older person, this week is bound to pass off very smoothly. In many cases, promotion will result from hard work and application. You are advised to forge ahead on all fronts. Partners and spouses will play an exceptionally big part in your life during this week. Do not indulge in dubious love adventures. Good dates: 21, 22 and 26. Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 7. Favourable direction: North-west.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) Be prepared for delays and new problems in your professional and domestic affairs. Take nothing for granted, especially where property and elders are concerned. Conserve your resources and check extravagant tendencies. Pay attention to minute business details. Your hard work and sincerity will now meet with recognition. Books can be your best friends at the moment. Good dates: 23, 24 and 25. Lucky numbers: 8, 1 and 10. Favourable direction: West.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) A week of steady, rapid progress is foreseen for you. You will gain by your own hunches, hard work and enterprise. Your domestic life will also bring much joy. A secret matter or association will benefit you and family friends will show great cooperation. Pay attention to minute business details and take the advice of elders. Be careful not to displease your employer or chief. Good dates: 22, 23, 25 and 26. Lucky numbers: 1, 9 and 11. Favourable direction: South.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) A secret matter of great importance will be decided in your favour. Your professional status will be raised. You will be praised by all your friends and relatives. Domestic affairs may go beyond your control. Your business and financial affairs will prosper and a promotion is far from improbable. Travel and push your business affairs to the utmost. Good dates: 20, 23 and 26. Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8. Favourable direction: North.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) Take every possible advantage of favourable stellar influences. Your hard work will now meet with recognition. Follow your own hunches. Existing stellar influences operating in your favour may be lost through extravagance or overoptimism. This week will be a happy and successful one. You must remain on your guard. Keep business associates in good humour. Good dates: 23, 24 and 26. Lucky numbers: 7, 4 and 8. Favourable directions: South and East.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) There is risk of loss and chances of separation from loved ones. Ill health also threatens you. Speculation, dealings with business partners, courtship, marriage and changes should be deferred. Courage, faith and fortitude will help you greatly in successfully tackling the problems facing you. You may join some friends for a picnic and have a good time. Seek and act upon the advice of elders. Do not have much faith in new friendships. Good dates: 23, 25 and 26. Lucky numbers: 3, 9 and 11. Favourable direction: South.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) Good fortune and a lot of happiness is your portion this week. Some people will buy new vehicles, ornaments and clothes for their families. Letters will bring in good news. This is the right time to enter into business agreements. Those having foreign exchange problems are likely to find instant solutions. Keep your employers in good humour. Meet old friends. Good dates: 20, 21 and 24. Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8. Favourable direction: West.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) Mixed stellar influences indicate some success. You will be held in high esteem by others. A good week for love and matrimonial affairs. Your family will acquire luxury goods. Sports and speculation augur well. Revive old contacts to suit your immediate ends. Look after the health of your family members. Good dates: 21, 23 and 25. Lucky numbers: 1, 4, and 7. Favourable directions: East and South.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) You will find yourself very busy throughout this week. Soon you will be rewarded for your hard work. Your friends will praise you and suits and debts will not affect routine work. Untimely male and female nights are bound to affect your health. Medical expenditure is foreseen in your family. Travel if necessary. Good dates: 20, 22 and 25. Lucky numbers: 3, 9, and 4. Favourable direction: West.

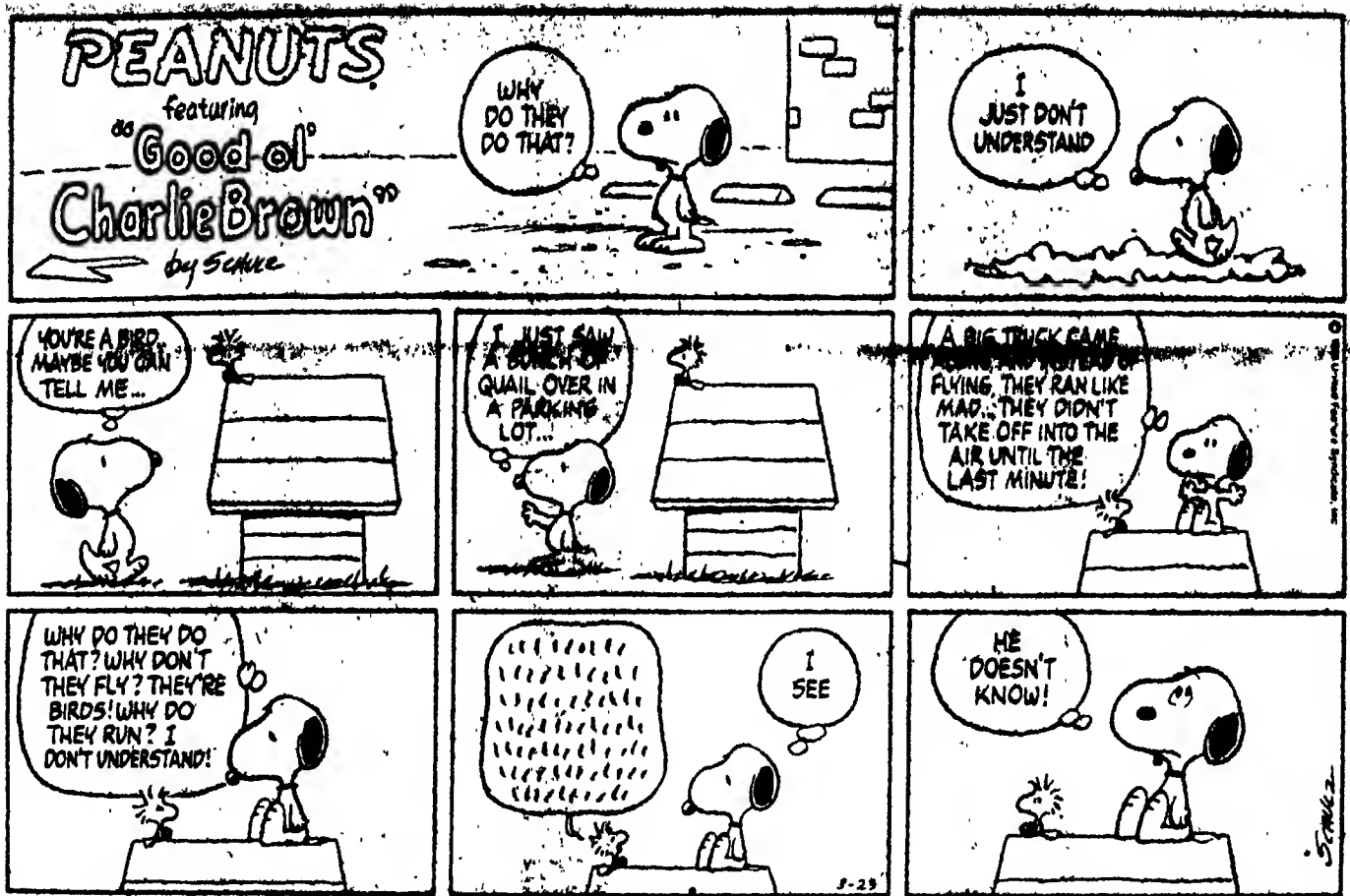


AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) You are advised to keep a constant watch on your business affairs and correspondence. Be tactful in your dealings with those in authority, lawyers and friends from the opposite sex. Your happiness is likely to be marred by disputes. Some legal expenses may crop up. An unexpected journey is also likely. Good dates: 24, 25 and 26. Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7. Favourable directions: South-East and South.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) There is risk of loss and chances of separation from loved ones. Safeguard the health of family members. Speculation, dealings with partners, courtship, marriage and changes must be postponed. Courage, faith and fortitude will help you to overcome the problems of life. Friends of the opposite sex may betray you. Good dates: 23, 24 and 26. Lucky numbers: 3, 9, and 8. Favourable direction: South.

M. B. RAMAN



VARIETY science

A helping hand

WHEN people have a leg or an arm amputated, a socket has to be made to catch the stump before an artificial limb can be fitted. Producing them has, so far, been expensive and time-consuming, requiring the skills of a team of craftsmen. Conventionally, the procedure is to carve the appropriate shape out of a block of wood, or to beat an aluminium alloy sheet to fit a third, more recent technique, is to build up layers of glass-reinforced plastics, applied in the form of bandages, over a plaster cast of the stump. With considerable numbers of patients waiting to be fitted, delivery of a completed artificial limb may take months, and the finished article is even then not always shaped to the stump as accurately as it really needs to be to avoid undue discomfort.

For some years it has been apparent that the potential advantages of thermoplastics, which become soft and workable when heated, were significant if only they could be reliably exploited. For example, thermoplastic sockets could be

made in a small fraction of the time taken to produce the conventional ones, they would do away with corrosion problems, be more hygienic and would allow the cast shape to be reproduced with a high degree of accuracy. Moreover, they would be significantly cheaper. Techniques for plastics-forming require a mould, or pattern, of the shape that is to be reproduced, into which the thermoplastic material is injected or formed. The cost of making such a tool and setting it up on a machine makes the technique uneconomical unless a large number of parts are to be made to that particular shape. But every patient has individual physical characteristics that have to be matched by the socket, so no two sockets can have identical shapes; it is essential, too, that each socket is a good fit. This rules out the large-scale production techniques.

A forming machine developed by the Biomedical Research and Development Unit, Queen Mary's Hospital, London takes up an area of about one half of a square metre. There are a large number of mate-

rials that may be formed into artificial limbs. A short list of them was compiled after rejecting those that were obviously unsuitable through being, for example, not elastic enough, too brittle to withstand impact satisfactorily, or prone to fatigue in the working temperature range. After considerable experimentation, one of the modified polypropylenes was selected which, incidentally, was so cheap that the cost of a preform was only about one pound sterling. It is likely that there are other suitable materials.

A clinical trial began in June, 1977, on 12 patients who had undergone a below-the-knee amputation. It has since been extended to 25 patients. Some of them have now worn their sockets regularly for more than 27 original polypropylene sockets that were supplied and so far there have been no failures, mechanical breakdowns or need for refitting. In spite of the considerable range in the size and shape of the patients' stumps, one size of preform has been found good enough.

The new process has opened the way to making high quality sockets cheaply and quickly.

NOT IN ORDER

MR ZAIL SINGH, the Home Minister, is at loggerheads with the Director General of BSF, Mr Shrawan Tandon, who does not seem ready to be cowed down. A few months ago, during Mr Charan Singh's brief tenure, Mr Tandon heard some complaints against two senior BSF officers who were then posted in Delhi. One of them was a DIG who was to become an IG very soon. After making inquiries, Mr Tandon found the complaints to be well-founded. They were made on grounds of misconduct. Although Mr Tandon knew the two officers were guilty, he could not order departmental action. Therefore, he ordered their transfer on disciplinary grounds.

The officers got in touch with Mr Charan Singh's secretariat. The PM advised Mr Shrawan Tandon to withdraw his orders but Mr Tandon very politely refused to yield. He asked his office to issue transfer orders without any further delay. In between, the Government at the Centre stepped down and in came Mrs Gandhi. Both the officers then pleaded with some Congress (I) men to win favours from Mr Sanjay Gandhi or his men. Mr Tandon was told that Mr Sanjay Gandhi was opposed to the two officers being transferred. But Mr Tandon did not budge. He told the MPs that Mr Gandhi had never asked him to withdraw the transfer orders. A very powerful member of the PM's Secretariat then contacted the Director General and asked him to cancel the transfer orders. He even issued a note to add a touch of authority. Political pressure continued. But Mr Tandon stood firm.

Finally the Home Minister himself called the Director General and asked him to cancel the transfer orders without delay. Mr Tandon asked for a written order from the Home Minister, which was given thereafter. Although he cancelled the transfer orders, Mr Tandon told the Home Minister of how he had withstood pressure to cancel the postings from the former PM.

In an earlier case also the DG, BSF, known for his firm principles withstood pressure from the former Home Ministry and CBI Director, Mr R. D. Singh, to send an officer, Mr Batia, to the CBI on deputation from BSF. After sending a note to the Home Ministry he passed an order cancelling the transfer orders for the two officers. But the Home Minister was annoy-



Giani Zail Singh

ed by his resistance. Subsequently, all proposals sent to the Ministry by the Director General such as those for cadre-review and creation of new posts are being turned down. These proposals were sent to overcome stagnation in BSF. It seems that the DG will have to pay for his honesty and integrity. And a force which has not had problems of indiscipline, or was affected by the police revolt, is now seething with discontent.

FUND OF ENERGY

WHILE industry suffers from lack of power, the Energy Ministry seems preoccupied with redecorating the rooms of bureaucrats. About Rs. 25,000 is understood to have been spent on doing up the rooms of Mr Abdul Barkat Ataullah Khan Chowdhury. It seems the Ministry had some funds that remained unspent on the administrative account from the previous year which they would have otherwise had to surrender. So they decided to spend it. Even under secretaries in the Ministry have

A. B. A. Ghani Khan Chaudhury



been given Decora carpets. The room the former Energy Minister's PA used has been converted into a bedroom.

NO ORIENTER

THE Bureau for Police Research and Development (BPR & D) is a very important department for training and coordinating the work of the Indian police. The post of Director, training in the department is held by an officer of the rank of I.G. The Prime Minister recently stressed the need to reorganise and modernise the police force. According to her, incidents like the recent lathi charge on blinds occur because of a lack of orientation on how to deal with situations. But the post of Director, training (BPR & D), the officer responsible for imparting the training, is lying vacant for the last five months. The post was last occupied by Mr K. N. Prasad, who left in the first week of December and joined the Home Ministry to look after crime in the Dhanbad belt. The Director, training is the coordinator for all the police training institutes and all orientation courses. Surprisingly, Governments have been known to appoint only such officers as head of this department, who have fallen out of favour.

VVIMP

HE IS one of the juniormost members of the Lok Sabha. He was elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time in January 1980. He is very close to the powers-that-be in the Congress (I) and has been allotted a house on Tughlak Road. Traditionally, only Cabinet Ministers and full secretaries are entitled to these bungalows. In rare cases a very senior leader can also have a house on Tughlak Road. But this gentleman in the ruling Party is important: there are three telephone lines in this house, a police constable to guard it, and a host of secretaries to stop prying journalists from entering the bungalow. In case you want an appointment with him, Mr Secretary would tell you: "Sorry, sir. You can try next week. I will try my best. You see this week he is very busy." Interestingly, the MP does not have a past to boast of in the Congress. Dozens of imported cars are always seen waiting outside his bungalow — which makes it easy to recognise — and also crowds of businessmen in safari suits.

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SUNDAY

ASSAM
Is there a solution?



Who was the failed assassin?

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HOW 'KARMA COLA' BECAME A HIT

By the author

GITA MEHTA



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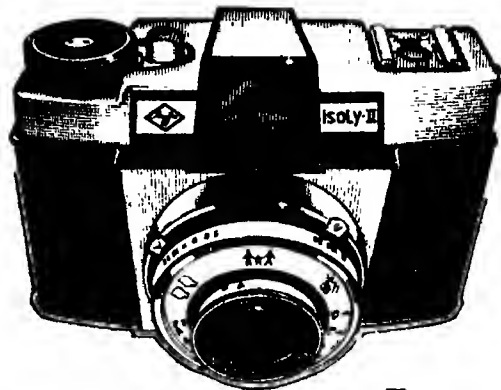
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"Karma Cola" has become an instant bestseller and its author, Gita Mehta, a new star on the publishing horizon. The extraordinary book details how Hindu philosophy is being distorted and misunderstood by those in the West who seek instant nirvana. Gita Mehta narrates how she came to write this, her first book. Also, the story of her quest for self-expression.

On April 14, Ram Bhulchand Lalwani, a resident of Baroda, threw a spring-knife at Mrs. Indira Gandhi as she was leaving Parliament House. The three-and-a-half inch knife fell at her feet. Lalwani was promptly overpowered by the PM's security staff. Top law and order agencies including the Intelligence Bureau are probing Lalwani's political connections. SUNDAY recounts the drama.

On paper at least, Moham-madan Sporting this season has the best football team. Its first test will be the Federation Cup beginning on April 18. How did Moham-madan Sporting pick up the Malden's superstars in one swap? Who organised the coup? Will the current team bring back Mohammedan Sporting's lost glory? The club's passionate supporters are waiting with bated breath.



Some of the worst fears about Assam seem to be inexorably coming true. Almost everybody's last bet, Mrs. Gandhi's magical healing powers in dealing with the North-east, seems to be failing this time. What is the mood in Assam where everybody is acutely conscious of reaching a watershed from where there is no return?

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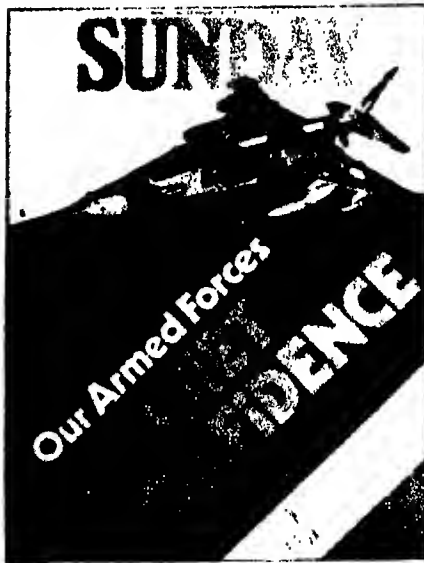
Cover transparency of Gita Mehta by Nic Corman
and of Mrs. Gandhi by Chitrajit Ghosh

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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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Waiting for war

"OUR Armed Forces: A quiet confidence" (March 23) by Saumitra Bauerjee presents an overview of India's military strength and strategy as compared with those of her neighbours. The need to enhance our military capability was first felt after the 1962 war with China. It is clear that Pakistan is preparing an atom bomb, but as Dr Bhabani Sengupta says, very little will remain of Pakistan if the military junta attacks India. However, in order to strengthen the armed forces, obsolete arms and weapons must be replaced by efficient modern armouries and missiles. Besi-

des, since our country is rich in nuclear raw materials, it is only sensible to go the nuclear way. It is obvious that if peace and security in the subcontinent is to be maintained, India must prepare for war. *Soubhagyabanta Maharana, Bolangir*

OUR Armed forces have been equipped to some extent with modern weapons following the 1971 war, but compared to the armies of developed countries, it is still in its infancy. The present number of defence production establishments in the country is not enough to equip an Army of a country of India's size. *Bhupen Bosu, Jamshedpur*

EVEN though India's military capability has vastly improved, it must be strengthened owing to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Other important factors to be noted are the US move to arm Pakistan and China's new policy of modernisation of its armed forces. Gradually, we shall have to reduce external dependence for weapons. *Poovar V. Sudhakaran, Trivandrum*

THE apprehensions and suggestions of Air Commodore S Nair (Retd.) in "Is the South exposed?" (March 23) deserve special attention, and should be examined in detail by experts. At least military intelligence on the high seas as well as the super power operations in the region must be closely watched. What is most important is that we will have to decide our strategy as quickly as possible, and make suitable budget provisions. *R. N. Lahiri, Calcutta*

Blind to reason

APROPOS of the report on the "Blind lathi-charge" (March 23) by Ajoy Bose, the unprecedented brutal attack by Delhi Police on a procession of blind men on the World Day of the Disabled deserves to be condemned in the strongest possible terms. By no stretch of imagination could a few hundred blind men pose a law and order problem. Of late, the atrocities by the police have been increasing. It seems reason and humaneness are beyond the police. *S. G. Balani, Bombay*

AJOY BOSE did a remarkable job of describing the humiliation of the blind men. It was most callous of the Government to beat up and arrest the blind instead of ameliorating their lot. *Vinayak Mishra, Delhi*

THE blind attack was among the most gruesome of police atrocities in the recent past, and calls for immediate action. Mrs Gandhi's profuse apologies for the incident might give some

solace to the victims, but will it bring a sense of security to thousands of intimidated citizens? The law has been framed in the interest of citizens to give them a sense of security, not for supporting tyranny. The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr Jyoti Basu said of the guardians of the law "The mentality of the police cannot be changed overnight. It will take some time." But persons in authority should realise that if faith in the Government is lost, the country will fast approach the stage of a revolution. *S. Narasimha Rao, Paradip*

WORDS fail to convey the sense of shock and disgust at the brutal assault. It seems cruelty and callousness are common attributes of the police. But this is hardly surprising; raping teenage girls and torturing innocent people in lock-up are other crimes the police are known to commit most frequently. Only when they are subject to the same torture, insult and humiliation will the police learn a lesson. After last May's police agitation in various parts of the

Hail The Mail

ASHOK KAMATH's "Many a slip" (March 9), projecting the evening English daily from Madras, *Indian Sun*, looks biased. The new daily, which carries Tamil and English reports, does not stand any comparison with *The Mail* either in news content, printing or presentation with a neat get-up. I have been a regular reader of *The Mail* for about three decades. The only defect with it is it now lacks the peppy, straightforward editorials of the late Mr Hayles. For the past few years, it has developed timidity to be critical of the government and of the Party which is in power so much so it gives the impression it is a government publication. It is thus natural its editorials tend to be drab and read like a schoolboy's essay. That way, perhaps, *The Mail* is losing its credibility. Yet, I do not go to bed unless I read *The Mail* in the evening. It is opium for me. *V. G. Iyer, Madras*

Dastardly attack

"ANOTHER Churchman murdered" (March 23) by S. P. Sagar presented another sad picture of Bihar's deteriorating law and order. After the banjans, it is now Christian priests who are lalling victim to anti-socials. It was shocking to read about the way Father Mathew was killed, and the repeated attacks on priests and nuns for years. Such crimes cannot be expected in any civilised and secular country. The Government must be prompt in apprehending and punishing the culprits. *Pradip Choudhury, Durgapur*

country many of the policemen's grievances were redressed and steps were taken to improve their living conditions. Yet they continue to be highbanded. *Bijay Kumar Jaiswal, Katihar*

THE Day of the Disabled was one of the saddest in the history of India. Is this the respect that policemen right in the heart of the capital show the disabled on a day devoted to their welfare? Your report described the incident in detail, and it is the duty of every citizen to protest against the police action. Merely sympathising with the victims and appointing a commission of enquiry will not solve the problem. The Government should take stringent action against the concerned authorities and the Minister in question should step down. Mrs Gandhi's statement in Parliament that it was not clear whether the policemen lathi-charged the processionists or were simply trying to hold them back is misleading. She should know, better than anyone else, that policemen never "hold back" a procession. *C. G. Karuna, Bangalore*

I WILL be failing in my duty if I do not condemn such a blind and brutal attack. The incident should make every policeman hang his head in shame. The use of force was unnecessary. Even if some persons tried to break the police cordon, the strong police contingent could easily have stopped the blind men without resorting to violence. Who are really blind? The police or the handicapped? The police in the capital should know that the uniform does not give them licence to run amok.
Syed Muthahar Saqaf, Killal (Tamil Nadu)

Another death

"DEATH in police custody" (March 23) by S. N. M. Abdi reminded me of a similar case which came to light four months before that of Kamal Thakur. On the night of November 13, 1979 at about 11.30 pm, 27-year-old Narain Roy, the son of a Railway employee who himself worked for the National Textile Corporation of India was brutally beaten to death by hoodlums with rods, bhojalis and lathis. His body was mutilated and thrown into a gutter that is commonly used as a urinal. The police was nowhere to be seen till the next morning when a passer-by spotted the body and informed the adjoining Golabari police station. The police informed the family of the deceased only after the post-mortem was completed, and handed the body over to them. Narain was once a resident of Golmohar Colony, and later shifted to Salkia. He was, incidentally, a friend of Kamal Thakur. If the Congress (I) claims that Kamal was their worker and raised his case in the State Assembly, why were they silent about that of Narain? Not a single enquiry was conducted into Narain's case, although he had no criminal record. Narain's parents wrote many letters to the CM Mr Jyoti Basu about their son's case requesting him to bring the culprits to book, but nothing was done.
Parvin, Howrah

An appeal

MY AILING husband is undergoing dialysis twice a week. Both his kidneys have failed since April 1979. We have been appealing for a suitable kidney from donors since then, but to no avail, since the doctors are not agreeing to a kidney transplant. My husband has undergone 100 dialysis treatments, and we have spent about Rs 50,000 so far. We are finding it very difficult to continue the dialysis and sustain the family at the same time. If we purchase a Haemo Dialysis unit we could continue the dialysis at home and the family could survive. The cost of the equipment and installing it would be around Rs one lakh. Therefore, I appeal to your readers for donations to save the life of my husband, and our family.
Grace Thompson, 70, Krishna Nagar Virugambakkam, Madras-600 092

Curse of partition

THIS refers to "Pakistan: paradise lost" (March 25) by Rajendra Sareen. The British Government exploited Hindu-Muslim sentiments to divide the country for "convenience of sway". The communal hatred grew to such a pitch that the Muslims could no longer stay in India. The nation was thus apportioned, apparently to prevent further bloodshed. The process of partition was sought to be completed in due course. All the Hindus of Pakistan were to be brought to India. But when numerous Hindus left the erstwhile East Pakistan to settle in India, our national leaders pleaded with them to stay back in their homes. Even Gandhi entreated them not to abandon Pakistan, and assured them of safety. Didn't our leaders therefore encourage communal riots?

Later in 1964, several Hindus were driven out of Pakistan. They came to India as refugees and had to rely

on official aid. Many Bengalis also sought refuge in Assam, which accounts for the present turmoil in the state. Thus partition could neither solve the problem of Indian Muslims nor that of Pakistani Hindus.

Dilip Kumar Roychowdhuri, Gondia

MR SAREEN deserves all praise for his critical article. But he should have also mentioned what Subhas Chandra Bose had to say about partition, along with excerpts from speeches by Jinnah, Nehru and Maulana Azad. Most Hindus do not agree that Jinnah, Nehru, Patel and Gandhi are equally responsible for partition. Subhas Chandra Bose was one of the few who aroused a secular spirit among members of all communities. It is a pity that our social problems are seen from a communal angle; most social problems can only be solved through class struggle and not communal riots. To see problems in such a narrow perspective can only encourage national disintegration.

Murmatma Sen, Bangalore

Right or wrong?

THIS refers to the article "Mrs Gandhi takes a right turn" (March 23) by Kewal Varma. Can the author denote what a "right" or "left" policy in India exactly is? When the CM of the Left Front Government of West Bengal invites multinationals or monopolists like the Tatas to invest in the state or when he permits Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, a private agency, to start a new power plant or when the Leftist West Bengal Finance Minister submits a pro-capitalist budget, these are described as "left policies" and actions. When the CPI and CPI (M) ally with diehard reactionary, communal and regional Parties like the DMK, Akalis and Muslim League, even these Parties become "progressive" and Leftist. When the CPI (M) governments of Tripura and West Bengal kill Naxa-

lites, tea garden workers and dock workers, their actions are not seen as Fascist but "left and democratic". But when the police make a lathi-charge on blinds without her knowledge, Mrs Gandhi is at once called a Fascist.

By the way, what is happening in the world at large? Are the Russians and Chinese going "left" or "right"? The talk about "left" and "right" policies is a stupid controversy which has caused a lot of damage to our economy. What we need today is pragmatism and productivity. The Communists and so-called leftists in the Congress in the early Seventies misled Mrs Gandhi into going in for large-scale nationalisation. The leftists later destroyed the organisation by ruthless trade union blackmailing. Mrs Gandhi should never commit the same mistake.

R. Banerji, Calcutta



First Number one

WHEN Prakash Padukone was playing in the final of the All England Badminton Championship at London, I was busy searching the record books to find whether any In-

dian had ever risen to the rank of the world's number one in any individual sports event. The answer was obviously none. With his facile victory over the reigning champion Lim Swee King of Indonesia in the All England event and having already won the Danish and Swedish Championships, Prakash has broken the record.

Since the age of 15, when he became the junior champion and also India's number one, Prakash has never looked back. He was ruthlessly consistent, and was never seriously threatened with facing defeat over the last nine years at the hands of any seeded player. In fact, the gap between Prakash and the other Indian players was so wide, he could not even practise hard enough for the All England Championship. It was, only by dint of his dedication to the game that he rose to the unbelievable position of the world's number one.

H. K. Dutta, Bokaro Steel City

HOW 'KARMA COLA' BECAME A HIT

By the author
GITA MEHTA

No book in English by an Indian author has aroused as much interest in recent times as 'Karma Cola' in which Gita Mehta has lashed out at the absurdities that surround the whole guru syndrome. This is the beautiful Gita Mehta's first book, and she never really expected to make the splash she did—reviews dripping with praise in the most powerful English newspapers and magazines, interviews on television, on radio and just about everywhere. Here, Gita Mehta (who happens to be the daughter of Biju Patnaik) explains, in an exclusive article, how exactly the book was written and sold. In India, 'Karma Cola', published originally by Jonathan Cape, is being distributed by B I Publications.

Publishing and Being Damned

Somebody asked Jack Nicholson, Academy Award-winning filmstar and hot Hollywood property, how he became an actor. He replied that he was hanging around Los Angeles and one day he drifted into a film. Adding, "Best damned piece of drifting I ever did."

THE American edition of my book came out at the end of November. Since then I have been frequently asked how I came to write this book. Actually what happened was that I accompanied my husband to a party in New York three years ago. As I didn't know anyone I was peering glumly into my glass of poisonous New York water, wondering if I could last the next hour, when an acquaintance came up and exhorted me to circulate. He made a passionate case for his view that wives who were not in perpetual motion at professional parties created a bad impression for their husbands. So, taking a deep breath, I plunged into the social whirl. And lo! A hand plucked at my sari, followed by a sonorous voice which said, "Here's the girl who's going to tell us what Karma is all about."

Grabbing my cue, I replied in equally witty fashion, "Karma is not what it's cracked up to be."

And the voice said solemnly, "Write it."

As the voice belonged to the president of the largest publishing house in America I resisted the temptation to tell him he was barking mad. But when the voice followed up his idea by telephoning me continuously for several days after the party, I suggested that we talk face to face about his problem. Such conviction I felt could only come from a person in imminent danger of conversion to the several madnesses of orthodox Hinduism.

"Why me?" I asked when we met. "I am not a writer. I do not condone this marketing of philosophy as a new narcotic. And I am not a theologian."

"But you're an Indian," he replied.

I then realised that the problem was not a personality flaw, but a fantasy which had been so widely and so successfully marketed that even this intelligent older man thought it a perfectly reasonable assumption that my sari gave me powers of metaphysical perception denied to the rest of the human race. Worse, he was prepared to back his assumption with a cash down payment. In the presence of such lunacy I took two gambles. I didn't take his cash, and I did take his advice. Which is how I came to write this book.

Best damned piece of circulating I ever did.



Allen Mehta with family members

THE cash rejection situation created waves in my happy home. Everyone tried to impress upon me that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush. But I knew what I was doing. I was going for the Big One—Total Control. No heavy-breathing editor telling me which chapter should stay and which should go, no fights to the death over the title of the book. I was after all a veteran of the terrible world of film-making, where if you are not prepared to accommodate the chopping and changing of your work, your film either doesn't get finished or doesn't get shown. Certain eminently reasonable voices of doom did point out that having written a book I might not find anyone willing to publish it. But I believed that the American who had brought up the subject in the first place would rush my finished manuscript into print.

You have to have that sort of fantasy if you're setting out to do anything as dumb as writing a book. And, cocooned in my malve, I wrote one. On a red plastic typewriter called, optimistically by its makers, Valentine—but for me no love object. The keyboard jammed, the ribbon had to be rewound digitally every other page, and the spacing mechanism was so eccentric that frequently two paragraphs ended up typed neatly on one line, creating a bar of impenetrable blackness.

Then there was the spoor of my entire household tracking across the pages. Rings from my husband's mugs of coffee, muddy paw prints from the dog demanding a walk, stains from sandwiches dropped by children, grease from my own hands rushing between curries and creativity, grocery lists and urgent household tasks, doodles on the corners by impatient friends and relatives, telephone numbers interspersed in the immortal prose. In short, nobody was taking my literary career seriously. Which meant I had to find Inner Resources.

As I washed the dishes or unplugged a jammed toilet or ministered to another guest in the usual unending stream of houseguests, I firmly repeated the following mantra, "I am not Gerald Ford. I can walk and chew gum at the same time".

The mantra worked a treat. One day the book was finished and winging its way to my agent in New York.

There is such a thing as having the right thing in the right place at the right time. It's called luck. In the very week that my shabby sheets began circulating in the cathedrals of American publishing, news was breaking of a religious community which had committed mass suicide in Guyana by quaffing gallons of a lethal mixture of Kool Aid and cyanide. Suddenly, religious fantasies were no longer 'beautiful' and 'self-fulfilling'. They had become to a shocked America 'horrible' and 'self-destructive'. American newsmen, American legislators, and a stunned American citizenry were asking each other WHY? And certain American

publishing houses began to take a closer look at my work to see if I had any answers.

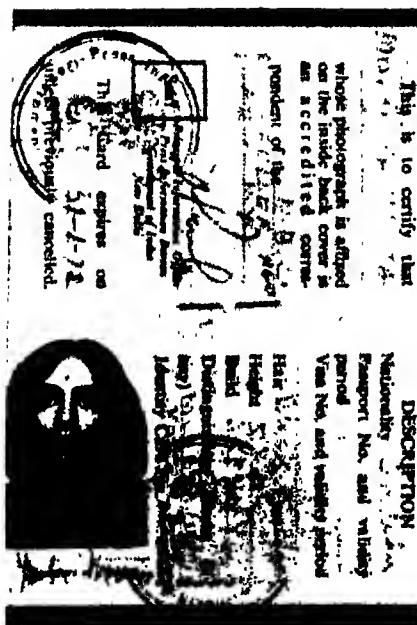
I was, as they say in the trade, hot. Too hot for the gentleman who originated the idea—who appeared to have lost interest in his whim completely. But hot enough for two other publishing houses to fight over, and as is so often the case, the bigger guy won. That left me in the happy position of laughing all the way to the bank—despite the doomsters at home. Or so I thought as I nervously signed in quadruplicate the sixty-page contract that held me more or less responsible for anything that might happen in the future, barring a nuclear holocaust.

There followed a four month period of nothing. Then I received the galleys. That unbearably moving moment when your badly typed manuscript comes back to you, turned by some magic alchemy into printed sheets, and all that is required of you, after the thrill of seeing yourself in print, is a wild flourish from your quill indicating All's Well, or as G. V. Desani would have it, suggesting to the publishers that they Carry On Boys and Continue Like Hell! Except that as you run your eyes down the yard-long sheets you discover that someone has rewritten your book. Without so much as a by your leave. Furthermore, there is some difficulty in discovering what they have rewritten as the book has been printed in an illegible type which is a cross between italics and Sanskrit. Assiduous research reveals that this is an Occidental printing invention called Oriental typeface.

Flagging the galleys at six-inch intervals are pink slips with queries from the editorial department which are so breathtaking in their pedantry that somehow anger changes to wild applause. For instance, the pink slip which dismises the whole chapter on Benares with the following note, "Author please note no such place in India as Benares. It is Varanasi. No river near it. Ganges River finds its confluence 28 miles north of city. Please refer Page X Volume X American Encyclopedia X."

And then there is the curt note from the editor saying that neither the creative people nor the chairman of the company like the title, and the sales persons say they can't sell anything called Karma Cola—it's so meaningless.

That's it, I vow, as I send a cable to my agent in New York instructing



Mrs Mehta's Indian Press accreditation card

her to return their money, cancel the contracts, and start all over again. But I have left it too late. Legally they own my book. All right. Then I won't cooperate in promoting the book. That shakes them a little. They're a very promotion-oriented company. They concede the typeface. They concede Benares. But on the title they won't budge. In six months you haven't suggested a single alternative. I shriek. They concede the title. But, they say, I must produce a subtitle explaining what the book is about. Tricky, I say. It's taken me two hundred pages to explain what the book is about. But I'll try.

And I do. I may have lost Total Control. But at least I didn't accept Unconditional Surrender.

IT IS at this point that I discover the wonderful world of writers. As I engage in mortal combat with the publishers I discover I am not alone. Tales of comfort are related about the anguish of other writers. Joseph Heller pitching a tent outside the skyscraper offices of his publisher and living in it for three weeks until his editor agreed to see him. Ed Doctorow rushing into his editor's office and trying to strangle him and the editor having to lock himself into a cupboard to stay alive.

James Clavell wondering whether it was possible to take out a contract on his publisher and how did one make contact with the Mafia. And dozens more.

Above all, there is that mythological hero of the writer's world. The author who got so fed up with the endless messing up of his work that he hired an airplane and dive-bombed the Random House building in New York where he knew his editor was having a meeting. The editor looked out of his window in the middle of Manhattan to find a demented writer weaving in and out of the skyscrapers, making scary faces under his crash helmet. Of course the editor called the police and of course the author was charged with disturbing the peace—but all the writing fraternity agree, what a noble martyr for what a noble cause.

These stories are balm to my battle-scarred soul. I have not discovered such a sympathetic group of people since all those ladies shared their experiences with me, sometimes in overwhelming detail, when I first became an expectant mother. I decide that all publishers are cads and to be avoided like the plague. Then I remember that I'm married to one. Meanwhile my husband's worst nightmare has come true, the one that leaves editors bathed in cold sweat in the middle of the night. He is married to a writer. The battlelines begin to harden, family meals are full of the tension of enforced small talk to disguise the hostility of implacable enmity. We're dealing—inadequately—with some pretty heavy domestic karma.

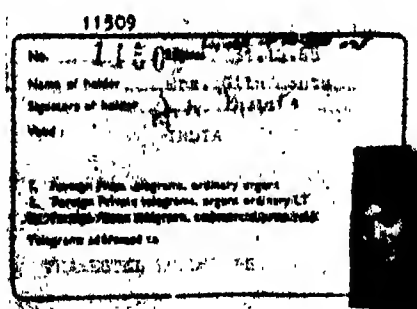
Fortunately, a package arrives one morning with DO NOT BEND stamped all over it. On opening the package we discover the cover to the American edition of my book. There it is, the conceded title *Karma Cola*, and the subtitle *Marketing the Mystic East*, and then—is it possible?—a picture of a saffron Golda Meir being passed off as a facsimile of an Indian guru.

Family ranks are immediately closed. Desperate telephone calls are made to America. America says it is too late to change anything. Finally we agree a compromise—suggested by my eminently practical twelve-year-old son. Yes, America says, we can give Golda Meir a moustache. When are you coming to promote the book? Next month? Perfect. Don't call us till we see you.

PROMOTING a book in America is a trial by fire and error. But it leaves you with all the skills of a street fighter, equipping you to be anything in later life from a heroin dealer to Prime Minister of India.

For instance, there you are in a sound-proofed room high in the dove-cotes of a warren of security-guarded public buildings at the far end of New York City and a fat man in a shiny shikar suit asks a series of rapid fire questions in the following sequence:

Mrs Mehta's television identity cards



"Who shot you in the middle of your head?" (Close-up of interviewee's red tika on forehead, pan downwards to shell-shocked eyes.)

"You say humour helps people not to be indiscriminate. Well the Klu Klux Klan discriminate too. How long have you been a member of the Klu Klux Klan?" (Audience notes nice middle-aged Indian lady's colour and confusion, as she struggles to find the right words to convey that she is the wrong hue for admission to the ranks of the KKK.) But as she flounders the interviewer is on to the next impossible question, "Now Mzzz Matey, I'm sure our lady listeners would want to ask you—a proper Indian—a really important cosmic question. What are your hints for cooking an ethnic Indian curry?"

The publishers are ruthless. They put you on the road and make you do between six and seven of these radio interviews a day. In between, there are interviews on the telephone, three-hour interviews in your hotel room, a quick rush to the bathroom to re-tie your crushed sari, run a comb through your frizzy hair, and make a dash for the television programme. The fact that the television companies want to interview you really excites the publishers. They are the final bastions of media hyperbole, the colour transmission evidence of star quality.

The only piece of information you get from the publishers when you beg for a hint, a clue, anything to prepare yourself for the ordeal of appearing on a TV show which you have never watched and have no opportunity of watching because you're either on a plane, in a taxi, or telling someone how to cook an ethnic curry, is, "Just don't wear a white watchamacallit. Whatever you do, don't dress in a white thingummy!"

Wrapped obediently in a coloured thingummy I go off to the TV stations only to find that the whole format of American media defies comprehension. In Boston on a snowbound December morning the producer of a show for ABC television informs me that I'll be the third guest. Being the third guest means that I come on for a quick ten-minute runthrough of Indian metaphysics, immediately after a boutique owner and her models finish displaying "Sweaters for Christmas". Indian metaphysics is followed in its turn by someone illustrating Irish cooking. Irish cooking is followed by Professor J. K. Galbraith predicting the nature of Recession in the Eighties. If there's any method in this madness I fail to find it.

The full irony of my situation becomes intolerable when I appear on NBC television in California.

The network sends a huge furnished limousine with an elaborate TV antenna worn like a proud tiara on its sleek black roof, to spirit me away to the largest Air Force base on the West Coast to appear on a talk show. The base is 40 miles outside Los Angeles and even the Puerto Rican chauffeur shows signs



Husband Sonny and son Aditya

ded gates, and make our way past dozens of huge bangars, manned by belligerently curious Air Force personnel, until we finally reach our destination, Hangar 43. Massive triple landing strips stretch into the horizon in front of the hangar. We park with trepidation behind a battery of blue chemical toilets and look for someone to tell me what to do. Meanwhile all around us helicopters are taking off and landing. Every time a monstrous helicopter lands, it discharges its curious cargo—a covey of Santa Clauses, descending to earth like plump moths, shaking with Christmas bonhomie. "Ho Ho Ho" they gurgle at the camera, while I stand rooted to the spot, torn between dismay and delight.

Suddenly I am surrounded by a group of over-familiar strangers who are running their fingers through my hair, shaking their heads in disappointment.

"The hair's bad. It really needs body. Lucy, get the hairspray. Jesus, will you look at that skin! Foundation, for Gawdssake. Make it powder too!" Lucy rushes off to a huge truck parked behind the toilets and comes back with large heated rollers.

"We only got blonde colour make-up," she says querulously. My hair is punched and pulled around the curlers. The make-up man is rubbing make-up on my face and dusting it off with powder. I can see my reflection in his dark glasses and I look like a very tired geisha girl. A producer's assistant breaks into the cosmetic frenzy.

"She's on next! Jesus get those curlers off her!" But the urgency of his message is lost in the folds of my sari as the gale force winds on the tarmac whip yards of silk over his eyes and mouth. He spits out my sari like a man possessed, as I stand there in all my bemused Indian vulnerability—surrounded by this immense and dwarfing evidence of high technology, electric rollers in my hair, blonde make-up caking

ing around me, in the middle of an Air Force base, waiting for the Santa Clauses to wind up their Christmas hilarity, so I can sit on the high chair with a heavily rouged American gentleman and expound on the horrors of marketing and electronic communications. I remember—in the light of my own sub-title *Marketing the Mystic East*—the story I tell in my book about the Sufi master who counsels his American follower, "Be careful how you laugh. You become what you laugh at".

The next day I am at the airport to catch a plane to another American city to tell more radio interviews and TV channels and feature writers about shuttle religions and marketing and junkies and passport rackets, when I notice yet again that the efficient and competitive American nationals who are queuing to get into the aircraft are always pipped at the post by what is beginning to be a stereotype set of characters, namely, a Rabbi with his tall hat, a Japanese businessman with his copy of *Businessweek*, and me with my slippery sari. While the good guys queue and stay on their marks, ready for a fast take-off, we three always seem independently to find another door leading to the same aircraft, thereby boarding the plane first with maximum comfort and minimum loss of dignity.

I find this a consoling phenomenon as I skitter across the American continent. Although they have put Golda Meir with a moustache on the cover of my book, and written in their blurb that karma means war, and copy-edited into the text that people from Kerala speak Kannada, and sent me to places where they put your hair in heated rollers, all in the name of being published, the fact remains that with all their high-tech accessories, it's the Jap, the Rabbi and me, who are the champs at working our way out of a tight corner.

So, bruised but not quite damned, I start watching—

Gita Mehta: A Star is Born

By NIRMAL MITRA



AN ENGLISH aristocrat and scientist (presumably in search of salvation) was looking for a sadhu whose urine, he had heard, tasted like rose water and was a holy potion. The long search ended in an obscure village in Andhra Pradesh, where he discovered the sadhu has a large following. He went up to the sadhu, and made a request for the sadhu's urine. The sadhu turned to the crowd and announced that he would have the honour of distributing his urine that day. He went inside and filled up a vessel with the liquid and offered it to the white Englishman. The Englishman took it; the urine certainly did not smell like rose water. But the sadhu had offered it. So the Englishman in search of divinity drank up the urine in continuous gulps. And found that it was just ordinary piss, with nothing divine about it. And he also found the assembled crowd of villagers cbeering sardonically at this foolishness.

One of the many hilarious ways some foreigners, commonly called hippies, are pretending to learn about Hindu philosophy. The incident is from a chapter entitled "Behind the urine curtain" in Gita Mehta's *Karma Cola*, a book about "western marketing" of Hindu philosophy. By western marketing Mrs Mehta means the instant sale of formulas for readymade comfort and progress, which, let alone everyday consumer necessities, has not even spared Hindu philosophy. Hence the never-ending stream of hippies since the Sixties, when the Beatles gave up everything to learn about spiritualism from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the sitar from Pandit Ravi Shankar.

Mrs Mehta's idea about what the hippies were doing here is simple: they were wasting their time. They found in India's poverty and squalor, an ideal refuge from their mechanical nightmare, and were goaded into believing that living in poverty was what Hindu philosophy was all about. What they were looking for was not God or the meaning of life and after-life; they were just doing the "hep" thing. For help they went to a handful of racketeers who dished out exciting notions of "nirvana made easy" — much like the roadside hoarding that makes life look infinitely simple to the poor. The gurus were and are doing business — on their own terms.

Mrs Mehta was born in 1942 into a family and generation that was actively involved in the freedom struggle. Her father, the famous Biju Patnaik, was arrested three weeks after she was born. "There was tension in the house that day," she says. "After father was taken away, someone suggested getting rid of the guns. My mother then took them away in a car and dropped them right in front of the Police Commissioner's house without knowing it."

Her first school was a convent in Krishna cult devotees: the fact is to repeat

Kashmir but after trouble erupted in Baramulla when the raiders came in 1948, she was rushed off to Woodstock in Musoorie. Later, her mother decided she should change school because she feared Gita was becoming tomboyish. She was sent to Loreto Convent in Simla. She attended college for one term in Loreto, Calcutta (1959) and then went to Sophia College, Bombay University, from where she graduated with literature in 1963. All this while, she took interest in national politics. She recalls having gone to a massive rally at Bombay's Azad Maidan in protest against the toppling of the Kerala United Front Government by Mrs Gandhi. "I could see I was the only woman in the gathering, and the police wouldn't teargas the crowd while I was there. Times have changed now," she said. Mrs Mehta also liked flying, and went to the Flying Club in Bombay. (Her father's flying abilities are well-known.)

Mrs Mehta sat for the Cambridge University entrance examination and qualified. "I had broken tradition by doing that. My mother was quite anxious." Eventually her mother gave up dissuading her from going, but remained half sure she was going to marry a foreigner. Gita Patnalk joined Girton, one of the two women's colleges in Cambridge at that time. It was here that she met Ajay (Sonny) Mehta, her husband. "Sonny is very unpretentious. Doesn't even bother to shave when he goes to office — because he just refuses to play the babu game, and is also afraid of cutting up his face. He taught me a lot about occupying your own space," Mrs Mehta says referring to his individuality. Mrs Mehta passed out with an M.A. in literature and later took to teaching Greek tragedy at Cambridge, while her husband got a double M.A. in history and literature, and became director of Pan Books. The couple have a son, Aditya (13), who studies at Westminster, "among the more egalitarian schools in London", as Mrs Mehta says.

Mrs Mehta's first venture was to write the 17,000-word treatment for a TV film on the 1967 United Front Government in West Bengal. She was later "fed up" with the Thames TV head, Jeremy Isaacs, whose office she stormed into one day to tell him his films were nonsense. Isaacs had told her that nothing had happened in India after the Raj. To prove how wrong he was, Mrs Mehta did a fine film on the transition of the Maharajas. This was followed by another film shot in and around Delhi called "In search of a paradise". The film was a collection of interviews with Indians talking about their problems, and portrayed the interaction between rural and urban people. Even RSS shakhas were shown. "I begged, borrowed and stole the money. This was my first independent venture. But it was only after I finished making it that I realised my problems had only begun. It took me a much greater effort to sell the film than to make it." Mrs



Gita Mehta with the people she has written about

Mehta, with her limited funds, ran from pillar to post in two continents, persuading TV bosses to accept the movie. The film finally sold in 28 countries.

Then came Bangladesh. Mrs Mehta was one of the few women journalists to have reported on the 1971 war in the middle of the fighting. She entered Bangladesh from Belonia, travelled with the Mukti Bahini, and made four films on Bangladesh. The first film was made before the war, in November 1971, an NBC production called "chronologue". She even did nightly news coverage for an American TV network. "The film would be flown everyday to Hong Kong to be satellited to the USA. I remember the PM had seen all my films," she says, raising her eyebrows. If anything, Mrs Mehta's experiences in Bangladesh shocked and stunned her. She recalls the scenes of horror when young women would be raped as men sat in a circle near them, unconcerned, playing cards; when four razakars were bayonnetted to death in front of Press reporters ("It was the reporters, I should think, who were responsible for that. The guerrillas were killing for the cameras.") when middle-aged women would rush to the border with thermos flasks in their hands, only to watch the fighting; when refugees walked listlessly across the border on their way to Calcutta. Mrs Mehta

had even met General Ziaur Rahman when he was a Major in remand. "He looked the confident type, with enormous control over his anger. But he was very burqua-conscious. I spoke to him from a distance," she says. Among her lighter moments during the war was when her Mukti Bahini escort, a middle-aged Bengali, asked if she was Relta Farial. And the moment she doesn't like to remember was when she and her crew were caught near Comilla, when they walked straight into a Pakistani brigade.

A fast talker, Mrs Mehta is full of praise for the new Indian magazines, and thinks they are coming out with reports that were never thought of before. The legacy of British bureaucratic middle-class writing has been disowned, she says. There was a time when the *Illustrated Weekly* was the only magazine — even though it catered to the westernised elite. Now there are so many new and readable magazines that come out with the news stories every person — whatever his social level — would like to go through. Another case of marketing, Mrs Mehta says. "The British taught us how to market products among the elite. But American marketing seeks to capture the masses. This is what present-day Indian magazines are doing. And not all of it is bad," she affirms.

SPECIAL REPORT

It was around 9.45 a.m. The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had finished addressing the large gathering that had collected just outside Parliament House. The occasion was the 89th birth anniversary of Dr B. R. Ambedkar and Mrs Gandhi had come to garland his statue and address a function organised by the Delhi Scheduled Castes Federation.

The crowd was a motley one, with a fair sprinkling of shaven Buddhist monks from Ambedkar Bhavan. There were also quite a few long-haired students from Maharashtra belonging to a militant scheduled castes organisation. There was real-



Creative Eye



Who was the failed Assassin?

MAJOY BOSE

ly nothing to distinguish the lean, wolfish-looking man with long black hair streaked with grey clutching his plastic air-bag, from the rest of the 2,000 strong crowd. As constable Tek Ram of Mandir Marg Police Station who was on duty, would later recall, "I remember catching a glimpse of the man but there was nothing peculiar about his appearance and I lost him in the crowd".

Mrs Gandhi finished addressing the crowd and started walking slowly, flanked by a ring of security men, towards her car. Just ahead of her was M. V. Kaushal who had taken over just five days previously as Additional Police Commissioner of Delhi Range. Kaushal who was Chief of Security Police before was today doing his old duties because nobody had been appointed in his place.

While Mrs Gandhi walked she stopped often to talk to some of the organisers of the function and some scheduled caste leaders who stood near her. Most of the crowd however were kept away at a distance of about six feet by a rope cordon held by a ring of policemen. As Mrs

Gandhi stopped to talk to Mr Joginder Kawade, a leader of the agitation for the renaming of Marathwada University, there was a commotion in the front line of the jostling crowd kept at bay by the police cordon. Before anyone could realise what was happening, the long-haired man clutching a plastic bag leapt forward from the crowd and threw a knife at the Prime Minister. His knife arm was however inadvertently obstructed by the men alongside and the throw lost its power. The knife lobbed into the air, grazed a security man's arm and clattered to the ground harmlessly near Mrs Gandhi's feet.

For a moment everyone froze. Then Tek Ram, who was nearest to the assailant realised what had happened and pounced on the man who submitted without any resistance. Meanwhile, a bewildered Mrs Gandhi asked loudly, "Kya hua?" (What has happened?) Tek Ram told Mrs Gandhi, "Yeh chaku feka tha" (This man threw a knife). Before Mrs Gandhi could say anything else, she was whisked away into her car by

security men — a normal security procedure used for all VIPs in case of trouble.

After Mrs Gandhi left, all those present were told not to move before the police told them to do so. The knife was picked up from the ground. It was a spring-actuated knife with a four-inch blade, sharpened at both sides to make it a stiletto type of weapon.

The assailant meanwhile was trembling with fear and when the police asked him whether he had thrown the knife, he readily confessed. He was clad in a printed fawn coloured shirt and black trousers and his bag contained two changes of clothes, a Delhi Transport Corporation bus ticket and a railway ticket. The police also recovered Rs 453 from various places on his person including inside his sock and back pocket.

Later, on interrogation, the man identified himself as a 37-year-old fitter in a Baroda textile factory and named Ram Bhulchand Lalwani. He lived alone in Baroda with his father — a deeply religious man who had taken a vow of silence for the last

Mrs Gandhi sitting in the midst of Buddhist monks at the function honouring Dr Ambedkar.



several years and written a number of religious books. When asked by the police the old man wrote in answer that his son had disappeared two days previously.

Lalwani on interrogation said that he had come to Delhi by the Dehra Dun Express that very morning. He said that he read in the morning paper that the Prime Minister was coming to the Ambedkar anniversary function at Parliament House and he had taken a DTC bus to Parliament from the station. The police, however, could not explain an adequate motive for Lalwani's rash action. Although he spoke both in Hindi and English, Lalwani's answers were muddled and incoherent and the police believe that he may well be mentally unstable.

Enquiries into his past revealed that he was a bachelor who was very quarrelsome in nature. He had quarrelled with his Baroda landlord and lost several cases against him in the High Court and Supreme Court. Lalwani is also reported to have issued cyclostyled pamphlets against his landlord, the court judges and the then Prime Minister, Morarji Desai.

In fact, in one of his statements to the police, Lalwani is reported to have said that he had thrown the knife at Mrs Gandhi to attract attention to the wrong done to him by the courts and the former Government. The police have also reason to believe that a brother of Lalwani was involved peripherally with the Baroda Dynamite case. The brother was however not chargesheeted since there was insufficient evidence against him. Whether this could be sufficient motive is however not sure. The police deny that there is any truth to a report by the pro-Indira Congress daily *National Herald* that Lalwani was goaded to the assassination bid by a RSS worker.

Interestingly, the Prime Minister herself and top officials of the Government were extremely reluctant to publicise the attempted assassination. One of the reasons for the long delay before the police disclosed details of the case was the fact that Mrs Gandhi herself was very keen to play down the incident.

The brother, Kishan Lalwani, a deputy engineer in the Gujarat Public Works Department, has been detained by the police for interrogation. So have the Baroda Deputy Mayor Pratap Rai Ramchandani and three others since Lalwani mentioned their names in the course of his interrogation by the police.

Of the five detained, three have some political connections. Ramchandani was a member of the former Jana Sangh and two others, Radha Krishna Chandwani, an electronic goods dealer, and Vishnu Sharma, retail agent for garments are reported to be members of the RSS. Police enquiries have revealed that Ramchandani and Sharma used to stay in the same housing complex as Lalwani. Chandwani was a good friend of Lalwani's brother. The detained persons however have no



Mrs Gandhi shortly before the assassination bid

criminal record, nor could the police till the date of writing pin down any conspiracy behind the assassination attempt.

Most of Lalwani's testimony during interrogation was incoherent. It is true that at one stage in the interrogation, Lalwani blurted out that he was being threatened by Chandwani and Vishnu Sharma to try and assassinate Mrs Gandhi. But, according to a police officer who was present during the interrogation, this could well have been a statement made out of fear and keenness to pin the blame on someone. This is borne out by the fact that Lalwani kept on contradicting himself.

In any case statements extorted during the stress of interrogation are often unreliable and Lalwani was given the full treatment by the Special Branch of the Delhi Police. When he was brought to court the day after his arrest for further police remand, Lalwani could hardly stand and he was brought in an ambulance instead of a police van.

A Sindh Supreme Court lawyer R. L. Panjwani, who offered to represent Lalwani for free, later told the magistrate that his client had been beaten severely. He also said after a few minutes of talking in private with Lalwani that his client was

forced to confess his intentions of killing the Prime Minister. According to police sources, despite sustained interrogation, they have not been able to establish an adequate motive behind the assassination attempt.

Mrs Gandhi herself did not seem particularly keen to play up the incident. At a high-level meeting a few hours after the incident took place, Home Minister Zail Singh is reported to have conveyed Mrs Gandhi's unwillingness to give much publicity to the attempt on her life. In fact, this was the reason why the police delayed giving information about the attempted assassination to the Press. Other Congress (I) politicians were remarkably sober in their comments about the incident. Mr Sanjay Gandhi was content to just say, "Only frustrated elements do such mischief. No sane element believing in democracy could indulge in such acts".

Lalwani underwent a medical examination at the SSG Hospital on April 17. The report of the medical examination and the medical opinion on the treatment was explained to newsmen by Dr B. B. L. Mathur, medical superintendent of the hospital who said that Lalwani was suffering from jaundice and needed hospitalization.

GAUHATI, Thursday, April 10: The ten-day-long 'peaceful Gana Satyagraha' called by All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad ended today with a lot of fanfare. Over half a million people of all ages and from all walks of life had participated. They had courted arrest eagerly and in thousands. They caused no worries to the guardians of law and order who in return remained friendly and understanding.

The late evening announcement that the Prime Minister, who had so far insisted on at least a temporary suspension of the agitation as a prior condition to her visit to Assam, in fact was reaching Gauhati on Saturday for talks made the leaders of the Oil Blockade movement jubilant. Sensing victory, groups of young students expressed joy in the normal manner—they shouted slogans and exploded fire-crackers.

Friday, April 11: It was approaching 5 p.m. Time for the 'Change Of Guard' at Narengi, some 20 kilometres away from Dispur, and the hub of the oil blockade movement. A city bus peacefully hijacked by agitators came from Gauhati and disgorged old men, young men, women and children near the Oil India office. Picketers all, come to do their stint in the round-the-clock vigil. To ensure that not a drop of Assam crude oil, totalling about 5.25 million tonnes, was taken out by pipeline to be processed at Barauni refinery in Bihar, set up despite the protest of the Assamese people.

Even before the last satyagrahi was out, the bus started filling up with tired volunteers who had already completed their shift, contributed their daily bit to the cause. Minutes ticked by. Lalmai Hills were in the background, and a gentle breeze blew across the green valley. A passenger train puffed Gauhati-wards. Suddenly a student leader, looking like a younger Bruce Lee, lost his temper. "Where is Duke? Where the hell is he gone? Why doesn't he take this damn bus away?" he shouted. Duke, somebody explained, was having his tiffin. Duke appeared after a quarter hour, supremely unruffled, a youth in jeans and in no hurry. If there was a touch of defiance in the air, he certainly underlined it. He took the wheel like a professional and sped away.

Meanwhile, other groups arrived on other vehicles—private buses, public buses, vans and trucks. Unfurling identity banners, unrolling tarpaulins for lady participants. And one by one, the wheelers departed loaded with the day's picketers. The fresh arrivals occupied allotted positions along the oblong red-brick office building in the centre of Narengi pipeline complex. The long journey

Rangapalli refugee camp in north Kamrup

ASSAM: Is there a solution?

By ARUN BAGCHI



of crude oil had been effectively stopped by the most organised, widespread and longlasting movement Assam has witnessed. Neither sticks nor carrots have shaken the movement's young leaders. Their persistence has puzzled politicians outside the state and made local politicians, most of them seasoned, feel quite impotent.

The euphoria of last night was however missing in Narengi. There was this gnawing apprehension that Mrs Gandhi's extremely brief visit meant no surrender on her part, and she was coming with only a 'take it or leave it' stubbornness. A section of the AASU (All Assam Students Union) leadership still held that she had really no alternative but to agree to the 1961 cut-off year mark for detection, deletion of names from voters' lists and deportation of so-called foreigners in Assam. Whatever the Union Government said, the oil blockade was hurting their interests. Therefore, the Prime Minister's keenness to get the movement withdrawn. And since the students also knew their strength, they were not going to give up the initiative or advantage. "If they (students) could run Iran keeping Khomeini as a figurehead, why can't we?" asked a leader. He was however peeved when a journalist wanted to know who was their Khomeini.

I met Indrajit Baruah at Narengi and was greatly impressed. An engineering consultant by profession, thirtysix, slim and utterly collected (I saw him pacifying a group of enraged young boys who wanted to

pick on a photographer from outside, with calm logic). Indrajit explained why he had to move Gauhati High Court for a stay order against those two Disturbed Areas Acts. "We can't let the Aamiv march over and apply force on peaceful satyagrahis. We preach no violence and do not want to be provoked," he said. He also went on to assure me, as some other movement leaders later did, that the agitation was not anti-Bengali, not anti-Muslim, not pro-secessionist. "Sure we realise Mrs Gandhi's difficulties. If she deports those Muslims into Bangladesh, there will be an international problem. If she sends them to other states in India, it's a national problem. Sure. But what are we to do about it? It so happens that most of the foreigners are Muslims, and they speak Bengali. But that we cannot help. How can we allow our own language and culture to be swamped by another? No, Sir, we can't drop our agitation now."

Later, we visited Gana Sangram Parishad, Purbanchal Lok Parishad and the AASU offices in Gauhati. Top leaders were mostly absent, understandably busy in discussions chalking out the strategy for talks with the Prime Minister tomorrow. What would she say? How much could she concede? Those second rankers holding the fort either knew less about their leaders' mind or were being cautious. But they certainly were eager to talk about the history, the geography and the philosophy of the movement. They seemed convinced of the rightness of their stand,

and of eventual victory. And like their leaders they also took great care to emphasise the non-violent nature of the agitation, and its 'non-parochial' and 'secular' stance.

The good old Mahatma had never had it so good. No AASU poster ever forgets him. His pictures are everywhere, beaming from all directions. At Narengi, in Dispur and Gaunali, on standing trees and moving vehicles, inside shops or offices. Student leaders swear by him all the time almost to a fault. The practice no doubt helps in advertising non-violent intentions or explaining away killings and other dark deeds. Surely one should see that no true followers of the great saint could have stooped so low!

Borjhar Airport, Gauhati, April 12: The IAF plane landed on the dot. Out came Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, followed by the Union Home Minister, Giani Zail Singh. She had a Rajasthani printed sari on. She had discarded *mekhala*, a traditional Assamese dress, this time, remarked a VIP to a top official close to the Governor. Was the gesture symbolic, meaning business and calling all to take note? Or, was the official being free with his imagination?

Outside, the customary crowd visible on such occasions was conspicuous by absence. But a contingent of Congress (I) workers that had been stopped at the gate by security men staged a demonstration. Inside, Mrs Gandhi had completed exchanging greetings with the assembled VIPs and was asking the veteran leader, Mahendra Mohan Choudhury, about his health. She turned to board the waiting helicopter a few yards away. Lalit Doley, an ex-MP from North Lakhimpur and most likely Assam's future Chief Minister should the Congress (I) form the Ministry, came hurriedly and whispered to her. She nodded and swiftly went out past securitymen to meet the disgruntled Partymen. She was almost mobbed; people were shouting angrily. The police rushed in, brandishing lathis, creating further confusion. Before calm was restored, a policeman lost his raised stick to a pair of hands that pulled hard: to his consternation the unlucky policeman discovered that an enraged Prime Minister had robbed him of his weapon. She returned the lathi and amidst shouts of 'zindabadi' went back to the helicopter.

Dispur, Jawaharnagar State Guest House No 1: Within ten minutes of her arrival from Borjhar, the PM began talks. Till 1-15 p.m. when she addressed a Press conference, one group after another entered the main lounge of the guest house to meet her. She sat at the head-table, papers in front, a pencil poised, thoughtful, like a reporter courting words in mid-sentence.

On her left sat Lalan Prosad Singh, the governor, who had been in charge of this problem region for a long time (far too long, some people say, to be detached and unbiased). To her right, the dapper Union Home Minister. The Prime Minister sat

1979

March 28 — Death of Hiralal Patwari, sitting MP from Mangaldai

August 20 — Charan Singh government resigns

22 — Lok Sabha dissolved and fresh elections ordered

September 4 — Golap Barboria Ministry resigns

9 — Hazarika Ministry sworn in

November 12-17 — Gana satyagraha in Assam

December 10 — Khargoswar Talukdar killed

11 — Dr Anjan Chakraborty killed

12 — President's rule imposed on Assam

27 — Start of picketing at oil installations

1980

January 6 — Elections held to two parliamentary seats in Cachar

3-7 — Nalbari riots, 38 killed

18 — Four picketers and Dr Robi Moitra killed in Dullajan

February 2 — Mrs Gandhi meets Assam students in Delhi

13 — After a day of large-scale satyagraha students suspend agitation till Feb. 24

21-22 — Zail Singh holds talks in Gauhati

24 — All-Party meeting in Gauhati approves '71 as cut-off year

March 3 — Agitation begins again

6 — Agitation suspended

7 — Students meet Mrs Gandhi a second time

20 — Blockade at Silliguri by Congress (I) volunteers

26 — Assam bundh

April 5 — Assam declared disturbed area

7 — Gauhati high court stays order

12 — Students talk to Mrs Gandhi in Gauhati

14 — Centre and Assam government challenge stay order before Supreme Court

and listened intently, frequently intervened to clarify matters, took notes, asked brutally frank questions, expressed displeasure with an administration that had been pitifully inactive and patiently prejudiced, spoke up her mind quite freely, surprised leaders by revealing how well she had done her homework. And she never forgot to wish good Bihu tidings to all her callers.

She met the representatives of Assam Sahitya Sabha, All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, AASU, Mahila Samiti, Jatiyatabadi Mahila Samiti, All Assam Minority Students' Union, Citizens Rights Preservation Committee, Assam College Teachers' Association, Tea Gardens Tribes Youth Association, Assam Plains Karbi Darbar and MLAs belonging to all Parties. In short, all those who wanted her to visit Assam or sought a meeting, got accommodated. Except for the AASU leaders no social preference was shown to any group, and including them, no quarters given. Time allotted to various groups naturally had to be rationed.

She made it plain from the very beginning that she wanted a quick settlement, but not at any cost and preferably on her own terms. There were priorities she would not disturb to please anyone. She cautioned all that the present state of restlessness was not helping anybody's cause. A backward State in an under-developed country could not really afford the luxury of the enormous loss and hurt the current agitation was daily inflicting. She refused to accept that the movement was entirely peaceful, that it was not anti-Bengali, anti-Muslim or separatist. She warned that dangerous forces were being unleashed by the stir and the Centre would not remain a passive spectator. She said the number of foreigners (45 lakhs) was clearly exaggerated.

She was very sharp on a student leader who acted impertinently. She came down like a ton of bricks on a Gana Sangram Parishad leader who chose to be belligerent. From a safe distance the leader in question later breathed hellfire. Later still, while nursing his wounds the same hero lamented: Those so and so Janata leaders (the actual word used was naturally more vivid), how could they let this iniquitous woman out of the hen-coop!

To the AASU leaders, however, she broached a proposal which, if accepted, could have paved the way for a solution. She sought to overcome the thorny cut-off year controversy by suggesting a starting year instead, 1971, for initiating the official procedure to detect and deport 'foreigners'. Talks meanwhile would continue, and if necessary, the question of detecting foreign presence opened beyond 1971. This, in other words, could be called a phased out cut-off period and therefore, a concession. The AASU leaders either did not grasp the significance of the offer, or deliberately ignored the olive branch. They were reluctant to drop the agitation and lose prominence and initiative. Perhaps the very mention of

the year 1971 put them off, even if the context here was different. They saw red and insisted on the National Register of Citizens 1951 as the only arbiter in determining who was a foreigner and who was not. The PM's repeated reminder that her

government had certain obligations to Parliament and to international law, that without Bangladesh's consent no one could be pushed across the border, fell on closed ears.

As the marathon talks continued inside the Guest House corridors

A victim of the alleged rape



YOU feel that you have come to a very special place when you disembark from your flight at Kilimanjaro International Airport. For a start, the airport itself appears to be located in the very shade of the mighty snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Tanzania. While you wait for your luggage, you are surrounded on all sides by tourists. Some of them are young and starry-eyed, others grey-haired and pensive. They come from all corners of the world, although the majority of them are from Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Most of them carry the inevitable cameras, for there is so very much to record on film. Moments and sights that words will never adequately describe, such is the natural beauty of the area.

If your ultimate destination is Mount Kilimanjaro itself, then you take the road to the right of the airport, bypassing Moshe and finally arriving at Kibo on the Kilimanjaro range. Most tourists, however, take the road that goes off to the left of the airport to Arusha, which is 28 miles away. Arusha is a small hill town, which is apparently sleepy at night but full of life and vitality during the day. Climatically, it is very similar to Shillong in early September.

Arusha is dwarfed by the immensity of Mount Meru, which looks down on the small town. It is a beautiful sight at night, when the sodium vapour lamps of Arusha bathe the streets with light and the mountain in the background. There are plenty of hotels there, although the best — Mount Meru and the New Arusha—

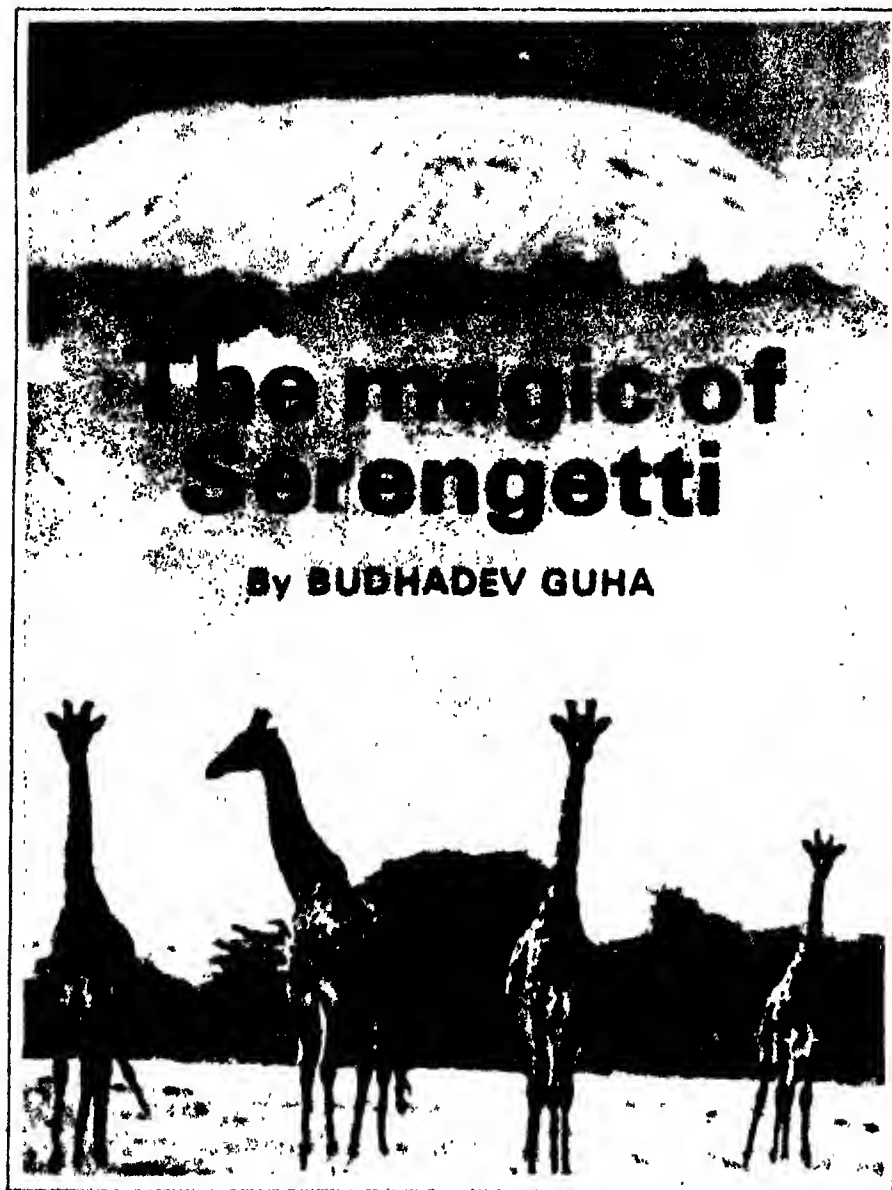


are quite expensive. The Tanzanian Government knows full well that the majority of the people who visit the area can't afford to pay for the comforts they are used to at home. So they have to pay, and pay handsomely. Today the place is mushrooming with hotels for the well-to-do.

It is also mushrooming with shrewd tour operators. They arrange hunting safaris, sightseeing trips and, for the camera buffs, special photographic safaris into the wilds. There are plenty of tourists and so there is plenty of money in organising these tours. Shopowners have benefitted too, and the trinkets they sell are always in great demand. Some shops sell zebra hides, elephant's hair bangles, lucky bones and other such curios. The Tanzanian Meercheum Limited produces fashion ornaments for ladies and pipes and other novelties for men which are all made of meercheum clay. There are shopping arcades almost everywhere one looks.

Arusha's streets are aswarm with Volkswagen "combs", Land Rovers and large trucks that are built to carry all the paraphernalia that accompanies a camping expedition. They are run either by the tour operators or by Government-owned corporations. There are scores of private operators, but some of them would not think twice before rooking a client. Many of these shady operators are referred to by the local population as Aslans, and are generally looked on with derision. However, most of them hold British passports.

On an average a sightseeing safari would cost about the equivalent of about Rs 8,000 if one takes a Volkswagen. A trip in a Land Rover costs slightly more although it is more economical for a group of tourists rather than a single person who wants to hire the jeep for himself. The best thing is to hire an a car



The magic of Serengetti

By BUDHADEV GUHA

and drive it yourself, but this is not possible if one does not speak Swahili fluently. The only other option is to take an English-speaking driver-cum guide. This mode costs about Rs 16,000.

The most popular game park in the area is the one at Lake Manyara, which was once the favourite stomping ground of the novelist Ernest Hemmingway. The great plains of Serengeti also get the attention they richly deserve and which they have received from time immemorial. Behind the popularity of Serengeti is a father and son combination, Professor Bernhard Grzimek and his son Michael. The Tanzanian Government is grateful to them. In fact, Michael died in a plane crash on one of the hills and was buried at the edge of the Ngorongoro Crater, where a monument erected by the Tanzanian Government stands in his memory.

Serengeti must surely rank as one of the all-time wonders of the world, with its prairie grass extending from all sides to the horizon itself. When you are deep in the interior you feel that you would surely have lost your way if it had not been for the slate-coloured road. There is not even a solitary tree in the vicinity, just acre upon acre of endless grass that seems to stretch to eternity. The plains of Serengeti are now divided between Tanzania and Kenya, although the bulk lies in Tanzania. So massive is the expanse of the plains that they actually stretch to the borders of neighbouring states.

Perhaps the first aspect about East African parks to strike a foreign visitor is their vastness. No cattle graze there, and there is no sign of human habitation. In some areas, however, one finds the red-robed, seven foot, pastoral Masai tribesmen, who serve to give places like Ngorongoro an indescribable atmosphere. Interestingly enough, they have never indulged in agriculture since they feel that digging up their motherland is unholy.

The concentration of game animals in this region has to be seen to be



believed. The plains themselves are teeming with life. If you drive across the plains, you will never cover a distance of 1,000 yards without sighting some of the hordes of wildlife. The variety is mind-boggling. There are herds of Thomson's Gazelles, Grant's Gazelles, wildebeest, zebras, giraffes, impalas, elands; among the birds there are bustards, sand grouses, secretary-birds and red-crested vultures. There is plenty of scope for the cameraman or the lover of wildlife. At present, there are more than fifteen lakh game animals at Serengeti.

In Tanzania the Forest Department has constructed beautiful lodges deep inside the game sanctuaries. These lodges, some of which have been designed by French architects, can hold as many as 200 people.

They have been built with the average white tourist in mind, and cater to those who are used to paying exorbitant rates for luxury. On an average, they cost about Rs 400 per night per person. Personally I did not care much for the lodges as they are somewhat incongruous in such natural surroundings, although there are obviously several others who think otherwise, or else the lodges themselves would not be there at all.

One cannot help but wonder after a visit to the game parks of East Africa why we in our country do not take the same pains to attract tourists to our game sanctuaries. If we did, the tourists would bring in millions of dollars every season. It must be admitted however that the Africans have a great advantage. After all, they have Serengeti.



**LOOK
SWEETER
BY THE
METRE**

**100% POLYESTER AND
GEORGETTE SARIS**

**INTRODUCING
TISHLON
POLYESTER TISSUE SARIS**

BOMBAY



DYEING



Coup on the Maidan

Who financed the star-studded Mohammedan Sporting team?
S. N. M. ABDI investigates



Surojit Sengupta



Shahbir Ali



Bhaskar Ganguly



Mohd. Akbar

FOR the veteran football fan in Calcutta, the new season starts every year on a heady note with the announcement by the Indian Football Association (IFA) of the transfer date for players. The transfers, apart from giving the fans a precise idea of their club's strength in the season's matches, also set at rest scores of rumours which frequently compel a loyal fan to lose hours of sleep. This year, the transfers began on March 15 and ended on March 30 but at least one intriguing piece of speculation still haunts the minds of countless football fans. This applies particularly to supporters of Mohammedan Sporting—a club which has purely on its own account becomes a tragic, enigmatic institution on Calcutta's Maidan. The question to which innumerable football followers would like an answer is whether Haji Mastan (of all people!) actually played a role in building up Mohammedan Sporting's all-star big-budget team this year.

Haji Mastan may not have extended a helping hand but the "rumour" has by now become almost a conviction. Mohammedan Sporting fans, scattered as they are over Park Circus, Raja Bazar, Colootolla and Metiabruz areas of Calcutta, have Haji Mastan's name on their lips and in their simple hearts the ace ex-smuggler has earned a place of veneration. Mohammedan Sporting has been down in the dumps for many years and its passionate and often unruly supporters are convinced that the Mastan magic will work this year. So much so that many fans turn up



A. K. Dutta, the club's coach

daily at the club's premises because they think that Haji Mastan attends the practice sessions! And excited fans are dutifully spreading the "good word". A short, scruffy, lungi-clad waiter in a popular restaurant in central Calcutta told me between attending to hordes of customers: "Sahib, this year Mohammedan Sporting will take home all the trophies. We have the best team in India. We have robbed East Bengal (club) of all its gems. Mastan has cartloads of currency notes. He is also getting some Iranian players for the team. Sahib, I tell you, this is going to be Mastanbhai's unbeatable team". The refrain can be heard almost everywhere.

Voluntary donations and black money play an important role in Calcutta football but it is difficult for anybody to substantiate these allegations. Under-the-table financial dealings leave even income-tax officers puzzled. In the case of Mohammedan Sporting's alleged connection with Haji Mastan, there is a fair amount of circumstantial evidence which can be used to investigate the "rumour".

The Big Three on Calcutta's Maidan cannot exist on membership fees alone. The growing popularity of the game has raised players' fees by leaps and bounds. Therefore funds have to be found in order to recruit the best footballers. Apart from the player's fee, the club also invariably bears other expenses: food, lodging and sometimes vacation expenses for the "star". Ironically, on paper at least, Calcutta football still enjoys amateur status. Funds, however, do not pose much of a problem mainly



The new Mohammedan Sporting team at a practice session: will the crescent be sighted this year?

due to the presence of private sponsors. Each big club has its godfather or godfathers who are interested in power. The easiest way of acquiring power is through donations. Elections to the club's offices are normally limited to those who can provide funds after assuming office. Apart from private donations, honorary memberships too contribute to a club's coffers. For instance, this year, Mohammedan Sporting is enlisting honorary members — Rs 300 apiece.

HOW Mohammedan Sporting bagged seven East Bengal players is perhaps equally interesting. Mohammedan Sporting club officials maintain that they were lent a helping hand by Surojit Sengupta, East Bengal's elegant superstar until last year. "Surojit knew that his club had definite plans to stab him in the back. So he wisely crossed over to our side", said a Mohammedan Sporting executive committee member. It is true that Surojit was at loggerheads with a section of East Bengal's officials. Last year there were rumours that Surojit would face disciplinary action which could even lead to his suspension. Sensing this, Surojit decided to switch over to Mohammedan Sporting. The club's officials not only welcomed him with open arms but also empowered Surojit to start negotiations with other East Bengal players on behalf of Mohammedan Sporting. According to club officials, this move was initiated around mid-February.

By the third week of February, Surojit had four East Bengal players in his bag namely: Chinmoy Chatterji, Shyamal Ghosh, David Williams and Prasanta Banerjee. These players

had been always close to Surojit and decided to cast their lot with him. Once a settlement was reached, these four players along with other Mohammedan Sporting players were taken to Ranchi and lodged in a hotel. This was done to prevent the players from changing their minds. Initially, March 3 had been fixed as the date for soccer transfers but later it was postponed to March 15. When the transfer date was extended, the players were taken to Varanasi and then to Bombay. Only on March 14 did the players arrive in Calcutta by air and they were lodged in the Rajasthan Guest House on Zakeria Street. The next day they signed for Mohammedan Sporting. More than half the battle was already won.

In the mean time, Surojit took a trip to Singapore. According to Erfan Randerian, Mohammedan Sporting paid Surojit's travelling expenses. In Singapore, Surojit reportedly spoke to two other East Bengal stars, Bhaskar and Shabbir Ali who were assisting India in the pre-Olympic soccer tournament. Surojit's trip appeared an innocent one as he was after all covering the football tournament for two Bengali publications. His job done, Surojit returned to India. Five East Bengal players (including Surojit) had already signed up for Mohammedan Sporting and the club officials waited for Bhaskar and Shabbir with bated breath. When the Indian team returned from Singapore, Surojit, along with a few Mohammedan Sporting officials, was present at Meenambakkam airport, Madras. According to a leading English sports magazine, Surojit was also accompanied by a posse of private bodyguards, apparently supplied by Mohammedan Sporting club. At

the airport, East Bengal officials were present to make a last ditch attempt to dissuade Shahbir and Bhaskar from leaving East Bengal but before they could reach them, the two were whisked away in a car. The same day they took a flight for Bombay. A few days later, they reached Calcutta and signed up for Mohammedan Sporting in the presence of Erfan Randerian, the club's president. This is the intriguing tale of how Mohammedan Sporting bagged seven East Bengal's stars.

Though there is no proof of Haji Mastan's financial contribution, some person or persons have definitely given the club a lot of money in the last few months. Mohammedan Sporting's current team, studded with soccer superstars, has cost a fantastic sum of money. Yearly membership fees do not go beyond a measly Rs 2 lakhs. In contrast, the top four Mohammedan Sporting players this year have cost the club slightly over Rs 2 lakhs. This figure was supplied to me by an unimpeachable source who also declared that it has cost over Rs 8 lakhs to build the full team, including reserves. Now, where did all this money come from? When I put the question to a well-known member of the executive committee, I was told: "What the owner of Gulabi Team (meaning Erfan Randerian) has done for the club, nobody else can ever do. He gave us everything with generosity. In the last 20 years nobody donated such a fabulous sum. If Mohammedan Sporting can take home even two trophies, the investment will be worthwhile". The Federation Cup tournament begins on April 18. It will be the first test for the club's new costly outfit.

'Chuting stars



Watching a paratroop is always impressive, but almost anyone who has witnessed the breathtaking spectacle of skydiving will tell you that the latter is definitely the more enthralling of the two. It entails plunging from a high flying aircraft and freefalling for several thousand feet without opening one's parachute, only doing so at about 2,500 feet. As if the fall of thousands of feet is not enough, the skydivers then try and land on a specified spot which is usually marked on the ground with coloured strips of cloth. During the recently concluded Air Force Sports Festival at Kalaikunda, Subhash Sarcar got the opportunity of watching a spectacular display of skydiving. The ten parachutists, led by Squadron Leader D. K. Dhingra looked as if they would miss the landing zone due to the strong breeze but each landing was perfect. Squadron Leader Dhingra, incidentally, was the first Indian Air Force officer to be sent to the United States for special para training.

And what if the parachutes do not open? Flight Lieutenant Mahajan, one of the officers who took part in the display, smiled. "Each of us has an extra chute strapped on although of course it is much smaller than the main parachute".

Ketchup country

No matter what you order by way of a meal at the tiny village of Ayodhipatnam, chances are that you will be served tomatoes in one form or another. Not at all surprising when you consider that tomatoes sell at the unbelievably rockbottom price of five paise per kilo. Even restaurant owners in Salem, a mere seven kilometres away, have begun to concoct tomato dishes by the dozen. And their counterparts in Madurai and Coimbatore are not so far behind, either. You ask for a masala dosa and you find it contains more tomato than potato, declares Arthur Pais. As if that is not enough, you hardly see the traditional coconut chutney any longer: it has been replaced by—you've guessed it—tomato chutney. How's that?

The only people who seem to be worried are the farmers. And with good reason, for at one stage last year, the price of tomatoes reached Rs. 10 per kilo. Now, tomatoes are sold in huge baskets that hold as much as 30 kilos apiece. The most interesting thing is that the baskets cost more than the tomatoes they contain.

Mystified



It's one of those on-again-off-again things, Parveen's film career. After her recent holiday in Bali where she cooled her heels for some time, she returned to Bombay. The grapevine has it that she completed her work in the Sippys' prestigious film *Shaan* and was in the process of completing

her other assignments which she had dropped when she suddenly left for her holiday. Knowledgeable sources predicted that if Parveen did another bunk, it could well be her last. And now, all of a sudden, no one knows where she is. Hollywood perhaps? Or on a holiday with yet another mystic?

Pilgrim's progress



Ever since the Holy Father came to the throne of the Vatican, he has been making pilgrimages and visiting places. First it was Poland, his homeland then it was the USA and Ireland. The Pope has been moving around a lot. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, seizing the opportunity, has extended an invitation to him to

visit India. The Pope is scheduled to visit the Philippines, and Africa which means he will not be far away from Indian shores. The Vatican, however, has not acknowledged the invitation but if he does come it will be the second visit to India by a Pope. So we may yet extend a *swagatam* to him, adds; Thankar Ghosh.

Faux old times' sake

He has committed one faux pax after another since he became Governor of Tamil Nadu. But Prabhudas Patwari's latest is as good as all those that went before. At a function organised by the Hindnackgachar Sabha, reports Arthur Pais, he proclaimed, "I wish I could speak in Hindi: it is the language I love most but I cannot speak it here (in Madras)". Now how about that? Although External Affairs P. V. Narasimha Rao spoke in Hyderabad Hindi, Tamil Nadu's Governor decided to address the gathering in his sing-song English.

The outside world is made to believe that Patwari is a simple-minded Gandhian who shuns all trappings of pomp and splendour. When he took over as Governor, for instance, he said he was not going to use an imported car and that he preferred the old Ambassador.

No sweat



There was this person who looked so familiar, sitting at Bombay's Victory Stall and wolfing down quantities of chicken dhansag. It was only after he had finished the two huge dollops of walnut ice cream that he was recognised as Farokh Engineer. "You can get used to so many things in Blighty country," a relaxed Engineer told Hareesh Munwan, "but you miss the Indian food. That and the delicious feel of sweating. I love Bombay and the atmosphere here and I'm sorry that many of the older establishments are now disappearing."

Bugged

"This is not religious propaganda, dear traveler, this concerns you." So ran the first sentence of a pamphlet distributed by a faceless group of commuters on the suburban electric trains between Tambaram and Madras Beach station. The target of the attack? The bugs that infest the suburban trains. The pamphlet exhorted commuters to launch a campaign "on war footing" against the bugs. Himself a victim of bugbites on the trains, Ashok Kamath

claims that he was among the first to sign. The pamphleteers looked like college students. One of them quipped, "On the face of it, this campaign against bugs may appear to be a trivial thing, but the fact is that the bug population has increased so drastically that it seems the authorities are actually breeding them in large numbers". P.S. The pamphlet concludes with the exhortation, "Go ahead and donate blood. But not to bugs".

Cold facts

Everybody knows that glacial ice can be pretty old on occasion, but just how old it is can be mighty difficult to ascertain. According to experiments conducted by the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmeda-

bad, the oldest specimens of ice contained in the Nehrur Glacier of Kashmir might be all of 1000 years o.d. What, as old as all that? By that reckoning it is just a little older than some of our politicians.

Having a ball



There were two days of nostalgia and festivity during the benefit match for former Indian skipper G. S. Ramchand, which was played in a purely festa atmosphere. Air India, too, did not miss the opportunity to display

yet another apt hoarding. The national carrier—which incidentally employs Ramchand—erected a banner which read: "Captain calling crew members: Please keep your wickets in an upright position." Air India,

Wheel of a time



Going around in small circles may not be a virtue by traditional standards, but it certainly has helped people like D. Lazar earn an honest living. In a circular arena about 20 metres in radius, Lazar undertakes cycling sprints which normally vary in duration between 72 hours and 10 days, during which he does not set foot on Mother Earth. The cyclist eats, sleeps and does just about everything on the bike, while the only thing that is taboo is dismounting. The flagging-off ceremony is completed with a great deal of fanfare and tom-tomming.

In addition, to keep the rider company, there are people who clap to a rhythm or sing rumbustious film songs. By way of variation there are groups of eunuchs who are specially commissioned to dance and provide special entertainment. Local children, too, add a lot of colour and to complete the overall picture there are blaring loudspeakers, colourful tubelights and garishly clad dancers. And of course, there is a series of breathtaking stunts by the cyclist himself, which always draws generous applause. In rural areas the event is a great draw and both before and after the performance, the cyclist is given a gladiator's reception by local residents. Ashok Kamath spoke to Lazar before one of his performances in Tambaram Sanitorium, a suburban locality about 25 kilometres from the heart of the city of Madras. Said the ace cyclist, "I do three performances every month and sometimes I get a local sponsor. More often than not I depend on what comes to me by way of the *hundi* that is sent around. I turned professional three years ago and I am not only able to support a family but also donate some money for noble causes. For example, the proceeds of this performance will go entirely to the construction of a temple here. I receive only a token amount for my services" But isn't Lazar a Christian surname? "It doesn't matter to me that I am raising money for a temple. After all, all gods are one," declared the 20-year-old cyclist.

Up with Downes

So there is yet another person who wants to champion the noble cause of the Indian bustard. An Australian wildlife expert named Downes feels that the bird can be saved.

Mr Downes, who began breeding Australian bustards in 1965, achieved a significant breakthrough within just eight years. Captive breeding, he claims, helped double the bustard population within four years. He suggests a joint Indo-Australian project to save the bustards, which are disappearing so fast from the deserts of Rajasthan.

In addition, lent a helping hand by way of providing return tickets for all the international stars as well, so fans had an opportunity of seeing some legendary players of times gone by. There were Rohan Kanhai, Sonny Ramadhin and Fred Titmus matching their talents with Glenn Turner, Richard Hadlee, Javed Miandad, Imran Khan and of course our own Gavaskar, Kapil and Vishwanath. More than anyone else, it was the fans who had a field day; two field days in fact. The cricketers were in an obliging mood since they were not playing under pressure of any sort. Perhaps that was why so many hearts fluttered every time Imran Khan smiled.

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Loyalty above all else



By KEWAL VARMA

SINCE Mrs Gandhi assumed office three months back, she has been showing remarkable single-mindedness in rewarding and punishing people in the administration. She also has her order of priorities in this "spring-cleaning" of the bureaucracy. The scoreboard was opened with the Delhi Administration. The old police commissioner was shunted out and P. S. Bhinder was brought in his place, superseding seven IPS officers of the union territory's cadre. Earlier Bhinder's wife was given a Congress (I) ticket from Punjab and she is now an honourable member of the Lok Sabha. Then came the turn of Jagmohan. Since he was too junior in the service, he resigned from service before he was crowned Lt Governor of Delhi. Under the law, the Lt Governor is the effective executive head of Delhi without being answerable to any elected body. P. N. Behal who was joint secretary in the Prime Minister's secretariat during the Emergency, was also not forgotten. He has been made president of the New Delhi Municipal Committee. Next to the police commissioner and the Lt Governor, the vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority is the most important person in the local administration. To this post was brought V. S. Vailawadi. He was deputy commissioner of Gurgaon when land was allotted to the Maruti factory.

The local Delhi Administration became her first target for very good reasons. Delhi is being sought to be made the first training ground in administration for Sanjay Gandhi. In the olden days, the heir-apparent quite often used to be made first a subedar of a province. There he would test his untested ideas, burn his fingers and in the process become an experienced administrator. If Delhi gets a new look administration, this will become a model for the rest of the country. But, perhaps, Delhi is too small a place. Hence, UP

is also sought to be turned into a laboratory for experimentation. Sanjay Gandhi recently held a meeting in Lucknow of senior officials headed by the chief secretary who also falls in the Bhinder-Jagmohan category. Still the Delhi Administration will continue to get the highest and closest attention of 12, Willingdon Crescent (where Sanjay still lives).

After the local Delhi Administration, intelligence agencies got the highest attention from Mrs Gandhi. The Intelligence Bureau chief, S. N. Mathur, was replaced by T. V. Rajeswar. Both these gentlemen have interesting histories. The Intelligence Bureau chief is the topmost policeman of the country. Mathur was brought in to this job just two days before the Emergency was imposed. But then he led Mrs Gandhi up the garden path. His agency gave Mrs Gandhi to understand in 1976 that she would get 350 seats. It is believed that this was the clinching factor in Mrs Gandhi's decision to overrule Sanjay and order elections. Mathur continued in the job after the Janata came to power, strengthening the impression that he was being rewarded for "misleading" Mrs Gandhi. Rajeswar was number two to Mathur. The Janata Government reverted him to his parent Andhra cadre. But the Congress (I)-controlled State Government retained him in Delhi as its special commissioner.

After the Intelligence Bureau, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the most prestigious intelligence agency of the Government of India. Its chief was R. D. Singh. He had the "distinction" of masterminding the "operation break-up" of the railway strike of 1974. Yet, as "ill-luck" would have it, before he was made the CBI chief, R. D. Singh was in charge of the special cell of the CBI which prepared cases to launch prosecution against Mrs Gandhi. He has been succeeded by J. B. Bawa who has superseded many of his service colleagues. The story of N. K. Singh, DIG in the CBI, is now well known. There are five senior officers of the CBI who have been packed off. The director-general of the Border Security Force, Rajagopal, could not have expected a better deal. He was secretary to the Shah Commission. When the copies of the Shah Commission's report have been withdrawn and courts, including the Supreme Court, are dropping case after case, Rajagopal has been asked only to go back to his parent state.

The Home Ministry is obviously a most important instrument of the Central administration. T. C. A. Srinivasanvardhan who was shunted out from the Home Ministry within a week of the declaration of the Emergency and was brought back as home secretary within a week of the Janata coming to power, could not obviously have continued as home secretary under Indira Gandhi. He was replaced by S. M. H. Burney who was information secretary during the Emergency. The secretary, personnel and the establishment officer of the Government of India have also been changed. They hold key positions as they are crucially involved with the postings and placings of officers in the Central Government. In the economic Ministries, the banking secretary, M. R. Shroff and the civil aviation secretary have been changed. It is said that when M. Menezes, chairman of the Railway Board, was getting an extension, a courier from 12 Willingdon Crescent rushed to the Rail Bhavan to stall this. But he reached too late. The notification had been issued by that time. The Planning Commission appointed by the Janata Government was virtually sacked.



Jagmohan

The first list of new members included the name of Khaliq Naqvi, a Delhi economist. But his name was mysteriously omitted. He was a card-holding CPI member 30 years ago. With the appointment of the new team, the Planning Commission could be renamed "ex-Secretaries Commission". What has happened so far is just the beginning of changes in top economic administration. Friends of I. G. Patel, Governor of Reserve Bank, are keeping their fingers crossed.

What will be most interesting to watch is how far the principle of "rewarding loyalists" is pursued in appointing seven judges of the Supreme Court as these vacancies

will arise in the next nine months. The total sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court is 18.

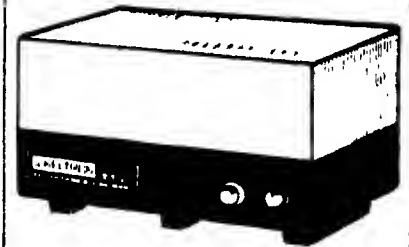
In the public sector, heads have begun to roll and new blood has been inducted in the aviation set-up. The chairmen of both Indian Airlines and Air India have been changed. The changes in the two corporations have served to transmit signals that public sector undertakings will be a source of patronage for loyalists.

In the early Seventies, the concept of committed bureaucracy was quite fashionable which meant that the bureaucracy should be committed to certain principles and programmes and not to individuals. In this period of "committed bureaucracy", many changes were made, particularly in the public sector. It did yield results. For instance the capacity utilisation of steel plants was increased from 65 per cent to 95 per cent. V. Krishna Iyer was appointed to the Supreme Court when committed judges were in vogue. But his subsequent judgments showed that he is committed to the philosophy of social change and not to a personality. This was evident from the conditional stay order granted to Mrs Gandhi following the Allahabad High Court judgment. Now what is happening is vulgarisation of the concept of committed bureaucracy. Top men selected on the basis of personal loyalty often don't measure up to the requirements of the job. If the performance of public sector and departmental undertakings doesn't improve, the economic future of the country is bleak. Similarly, in the general administration of the country, Mrs Gandhi solely depends on the bureaucracy. In her scheme of things, there is no place for non-official agencies, including her own Party. Hence, inefficient bureaucrats at the top and demoralised bureaucracy below can lead the country to a first-rate crisis.

The bureaucracy was made a political football by the Janata. Mrs Gandhi is only returning the compliment. What is, however, new is the spirit of revenge against bureaucrats. Here we will recall one incident. There was a police inspector who pulled out a hair from the moustache of Govind Ballabh Pant in 1942 when he was arrested. When Pantji became Chief Minister of UP, the file for promotion of that particular police inspector came to him. The old man remembered the incident. But he asked: "What has the DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) recommended?" He was told: "The DPC has recommended his promotion". The old man shaking his head, noted: "Concurred" and signed the file. Those were the days, those were the people!

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Dip unto death

The casualty list has touched hundred

THERE was not a hint of impending death in the murky temple pond. But tragedy was to befall a number of those who bathed in the waters of the thousand-year-old Shaivite temple at Vemulavada, 200 kilometres away from the city of Hyderabad Ramanavami, which was celebrated on March 24, witnessed hundreds of joyous pilgrims dicing, albeit unwittingly, with death.

At the time of going to press, the official death toll had reached 100 with 400 others fighting for their lives. In a chain of fatal events, the contaminated waters of the Gundam (pond) had infected several bathers who contracted gastroenteritis and carried the epidemic to their villages. The State Medical Directorate confirmed that they had located 497 cases in Karimnagar district alone. The district administration and the medical directorate woke up after a week with an uneasy conscience and only after hearing that a large number of pilgrims had died. Medical teams were belatedly sent in to the villages for inoculation and other measures to check the epidemic. Then wisdom dawned on the authorities to order the closure of the temple for an indefinite period and to drain off the stinking stagnant water from the pond. The tragedy, however, could have been averted if the temple authorities had paid attention to the sanitary conditions.

The deaths could have been in thousands this year. Usually, lakhs of pilgrims visit the temple on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri. This year, however, thanks to the scare generated by the February solar eclipse there were only a few hundred devotees. The only important occasion after the eclipse was Ramanavami, ordinarily dearer to the Vaishnavite votaries. Nobody on the temple premises could explain to me how the Shaivite temple came to be associated with the Ramanavami festival. To hundreds of pilgrims Shiva or Rama is the same and they do not want to draw a line distinction. After all as someone said: "Demudu is demudu" (God is god). The temple known historically as the Rajarajeswari temple is one of most famous Siva temples in the south. Indeed, next to Tirupathi, the Vemulavada temple attracts the largest number of pilgrims throughout the year. Pilgrims visit the temple not only from the Telengana region but also from neighbouring Maharashtra. Yet the town, whose population subsists on the earnings from pilgrims, does not possess basic amenities. There is hardly any drinking water. The panchayat

samithi provides drinking water for only half an hour every day. Consequently, the pilgrims are forced to drink unhygienic water from the small canal which passes by the side of the village. Vemulavada has just been upgraded to the status of taluk headquarters. Until last month it was part of Sircilla taluk, which had been declared a disturbed area because of Naxalite activities. Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, External Affairs Minister is from Vangara village, just 60 kilometres away. Surprisingly, neither the External Affairs Minister nor other State Ministers who belong to the district bothered about the problems faced by the pilgrims although the Ministers had received temple honours on important occasions. Ironically, Narasimha Rao was at one time in charge of Health and Endowments.

There is no dearth of funds for the temple. The temple itself is administered by a board of trustees chosen by the Government. The trustees have at their disposal nearly a crore of rupees which is earning interest. In sharp contrast is Tirupathi, India's leading shrine which spends most of its earnings on amenities for pilgrims besides running a string of institutions for Oriental studies and devotional music. The trustees of the Shaivite temple on the other hand

are trading on the gullibility of the pilgrims and their deep faith.

Even after the latest tragedy, the temple trustees are more interested in canvassing for the reopening of the temple instead of drawing up concrete plans. Already rumours are rife on the temple premises that the tragedy had occurred due to a "polluted" woman bathing in the pond. If that was the case, the pond would not have been more dirty than what it was when the tragedy occurred. Local people, in fact, complained that they could smell the foul smell of the pond's water from a mile away when it was being drained out even after ten days of the deaths. All through the Government has maintained a strange silence. There was not even a single Press communique about the temple deaths even three weeks after the episode. And it was only due to a mofussil correspondent that the incident was blown up.

The Andhra Pradesh Governor, K. C. Abraham's notification on April 16, 1980 declaring the entire district of Karimnagar cholera-affected makes it obvious that the epidemic remained even three weeks after what was stated as gastroenteritis. The notification vests powers in the District Medical Officer under the Infectious Diseases Act to deal with the situation. But what is intriguing is that when the Governor issued this notification the Director of Health, Dr M. Venkatrao, was trying to convince the Press that the epidemic was very much under control. All but a dozen villages were pronounced free from epidemic.

KALYANI SHANKER, Hyderabad

Violence on lawyers

Police did not even spare judges

MARCH 20, 1980. In the Gwalior High Court premises lawyers and their clients are talking to each other. There are a few undertrial prisoners in the Court lockup. Ghan Prakash Garga, an advocate, passes close to the lockup. He is called by one of the undertrials. Prisoners talking with their lawyers while in lockup is an accepted practice and Garga naturally starts talking to his client. The head constable guarding the lockup objects. He has a reason. The Gwalior High Court lockup has huge door-like openings on two sides with iron bars. Many undertrials have escaped in the past. Hence the objection from the police constable. However, Garga does not listen. Soon, a heated exchange ensues. By this time, the police constable has been joined by one of his colleagues. According to eyewitness reports, one of the policemen hurls a shoe at Garga, but misses him. The shoe, however, finds a target—

another advocate, Shivkumar Singh Kushvaha. By standers who had seen the incident, want to beat up the police, seeing the indignity suffered by the advocates.

Some advocates in their effort to restore sanity take the two head constables, Man Singh and Dharampal Singh, who were guarding the lockup, to the bar room, upstairs. The advocates phone the Collector and the Superintendent of Police to inform them that they had brought the policemen to the bar room to save them from the public's wrath. The Madhya Pradesh Non-Gazetted Police Employees' Union (MPNPEU) quickly comes to the rescue of their colleagues. They say that the two constables are being beaten up. The station house officer of Indra Gunj police station, Sujat Singh, hearing of the incident rushes to the spot. A few people, however, prevent him from going to the bar room. Two other SPs, Kishan Singh and Saini

Singh, also reach the Court premises. They are stopped by some people. Later, however, they prevail upon the people and are allowed to go inside and talk the matter over. After some time the Collector, S. Laxmi Narayan and the SP, Mahesh Dutta Sharma, arrive on the scene and succeed in pacifying the lawyers and the police.

Meanwhile, the Indra Gunj police station control room receives a phone call which says that a riot has occurred in the High Court premises and that policemen have been confined. Immediately, a police force rushes in to rescue the detained policemen. They go in with lathis and slogans against lawyers on their lips. The victims of their wrath are all those wearing black coats. To save themselves, some lawyers actually throw away their black coats. However, two High Court judges, Justices A. R. Newmarkar and Hargovind Mishra, are assumed to be lawyers and beaten up by the policemen. Justice Newmarkar, complaining about a sub-inspector, said he had kept his hand on his revolver which had provoked the justice to shout: "Do you want to shoot a High Court judge?"

The lathi-charge created an atmosphere of insecurity. The Gwalior Bar Association and the MPNPEU have made wild allegations against each other. Justice Yogeshwar Dayal of the Delhi High Court is probing the incident to ascertain the facts. It is, however, certain that a lathi-charge injuring 25 was made: probably the first instance of a lathi-charge on advocates within the precincts of a court in the history of independent India.

The MPNPEU has its own story to tell. They maintain that when the advocates started talking to the pri-

soners the constables objected. They feel that lawyers should seek the permission of the Court or the superior police officer before speaking to the undertrials. In the exchange that followed, the advocates were man-handled. Later, the policemen were taken to the first floor of the court building, beaten up and kept confined in a bathroom. The policemen's union has further stated that SHO Sujan Singh, went to the first floor to tackle the situation peacefully but was pushed out and an attempt was even made by the lawyers to snatch away his revolver. One of his epaulettes was torn in the melee, but the sub-inspector succeeded in saving his revolver.

Subsequently the transfer of two DSPs was ordered. It has further irked the MPNPEU. Surendra Singh, Parihar, president of the union, has demanded the transfer of Justices Newmarkar and Hargovind Mishra. At a Press conference in Gwalior, he said that as police personnel were being transferred to ensure a fair probe, the two judges who were also a party to the incident should also be transferred.

THE State Government through Mr R. N. Nagoo, retired Inspector-General of Police, Madhya Pradesh and presently one of the two advisers to the Governor (the State is now under President's Rule), wanted to dispose of the matter by ordering a probe by the Chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Revenue Board. Many in the administration feel that enquiries by Revenue Board personnel are always eyewash. In 1975, when the police committed atrocities on college students in Raipur, the then Chairman of the Revenue Board, B. K. Dube, now Chief Secretary, was deputed to conduct

the probe. The report of the probe is yet to be received. It was only when the Gwalior incident was raised in the Lok Sabha that the State Government ordered a judicial probe under pressure from the Government of India. The chairman of the MP Revenue Board had already started his enquiry but he had to abandon it due to the announcement of the Home Minister that a judicial probe had been ordered.

Since the incident, advocates all over India are agitated. In Madhya Pradesh, advocates from the capital to the smallest town protested by boycotting court proceedings for one to two days. In Gwalior, the High Court Bar Association has announced an indefinite boycott of the court. Sachindra Diwedi, president of the Gwalior Bar Association, has refused to withdraw the boycott in spite of the judicial probe. Advocates are demanding the suspension of the SP, Gwalior, and other police officials as well as the transfer of the Collector, Gwalior. The SP was a party to the lathi-charge, they say. The District authorities failed to take prompt action against the sub-inspector who went to the High Court with a loaded revolver and the constables who beat up the lawyers. They waited till a complaint was made by the High Court bench.

The MPNPEU is not prepared to take all lying down. It has demanded criminal prosecution of three lawyers who, according to them, assaulted the two head constables who were guarding the under-trial prisoners; cancellation of suspension and release of the station house officer, Indra Gunj police station. It has also demanded cancellation of licences of three practising lawyers who had beaten up the police constables. The police in fact, disconti-

K. F. Rustomji, Member Police Commission, with the DIG Raipur and office bearers of the MP Non-gazetted Police Employees' Union.



nued the practice of escorting under-trial prisoners to the court in support of their demands. The office-bearers of the union have threatened the Government with a statewide agitation by their members if their demands were not met. The district bodies have also demanded that curbs should be imposed on lawyers in areas of work which may bring them into conflict with the police.

Though no official confirmation is available, the judges have also expressed their unhappiness. Some of the senior judges told **SUNDAY**: "Why should a police personnel behave in such a manner with a High Court judge? They had their clash with the lawyers but their lordships only wanted to pacify both the sides". Union Housing Minister P.

C. Sethi, who has been deputed by the Prime Minister to tackle the problems of Madhya Pradesh tried his best to remove the bitterness. His first announcement was that the injured personnel among the advocates and policemen should be given treatment in Bombay at Government expenses. He called on the High Court judges, lawyers, policemen and met the injured persons. Before leaving he instructed the advisers to the Governor to remain at Gwalior and try to pacify the parties concerned. He specifically instructed his own Partymen Congress (I), to see that no political colour was given to the Gwalior incident.

M.V.KHER, Gwalior

Poor porn

Kerala Government gets tough

KERALA's Marxist Chief Minister, E. K. Nayanar, who is also Minister for Information of the state has taken the first step to discourage "bad films". He has suspended the state scheme for the payment of a subsidy of Rs 50,000 to every film shot in Kerala. "Indiscriminate payment of an amount to

anything that is produced is not considered desirable by the Government", the Chief Minister said. Mr Nayanar does not want to give equal payment to good and bad films. He believes that "undesirable pictures" should not be eligible for state aid and encouragement.

The Nayanar Government is pre-

Kamalahasan and Meera in Kanu Vettai, one more Malayalam potboiler



pared to face criticism from any quarter on this score. The new criterion for the distribution of subsidy will be finalised after what the State terms "open discussion". The quality of the films and their eligibility for subsidy would be brought out through discussions. The Government's decision to eliminate the "bad films" has been widely appreciated by the people. In choosing the films for state awards for 1979, the committee appointed by the Kerala Government had criticised the producers for giving prominence to sex, violence and drinking scenes in the films. The seven-member committee headed by Mr Thakazi Sivasankara Pillai, an author of international repute, had reviewed 42 films and found that some of them justified the accusation that films were used for "sexploitation", with adolescent boys and girls taking roles in such films. The committee felt that this tendency should be stopped. It went against the traditions of Malayalam cinema and the culture of Kerala. The members also wondered how such scenes escaped the eyes and scissors of the Censor Board. Equally despicable according to the committee, were the scenes of violence in the films. "The impact of such scenes on young minds had to be considered in all seriousness", observed a member of the committee. In one film, in addition to scenes of repeated rapes, there were eight murders and three suicides. Lust was found to be the theme of most of the films; there were only a few which did not concentrate on bedroom scenes. Many Malayalam films are becoming popular in non-Malayalam-speaking areas and even in the Hindi belt because of the sex they contain. Said a Delhi tourist who was on a visit to Trivandrum, recently; "We could not understand Malayalam, but we understood the language of sex".

The subsidy scheme was introduced by Mr K. Karunakaran when he was Home and Information Minister in the Achyuta Menon Ministry, with a view to helping genuine but struggling producers who need financial aid. The original amount was Rs 25,000 and the first dozen producers who received the subsidy deserved the encouragement. But very soon, film magnates and other vested interests began to influence the Government and by the time Mr S. Varadarajan Nair became Information and Finance Minister, the subsidy was raised to Rs 50,000. Further, the subsidy began to be given without discrimination. It is believed that the Director of Public Relations was transferred because he was firm that only films of good quality should be chosen for the subsidy. Out of the 64 films chosen for subsidy 40 are stated to be of bad quality and of low standards. Those who are now capitalising on the Malayalam sex-films boom, better beware their days may be numbered.

G.S. KARTHA, Trivandrum

Learning from Watergate

PROFESSOR Archibald Cox occupies a special niche in America's legal and political history. He was the US Solicitor-General during 1961-65 and is currently professor of law at the prestigious Harvard Law School. But his name became inextricably linked with the fight for civil liberties in democracies when he was appointed Watergate special prosecutor. 'The day of the long knives' in Washington when he and others were sacked by Nixon is history. Our experience of the Emergency and the fears some of us now have about the future of civil liberties in the country make this great libertarian eminently qualified to comment on the state of affairs in the two countries.

What exactly did he think was the role which the judiciary, the bar and public opinion could play in the protection of civil liberties? I asked him recently in Bombay "I think all three, the bar, judiciary and public opinion, are very important. The bar has historically been defenders of civil liberties. It is important that they continue in the same tradition as the bar of High Court of Bombay during the early part of the Emergency. The judiciary, of course, must be independent to serve this function. It is as we say in the United States, the ultimate protector of civil liberties. The written guarantees in our Constitution are enforced by the judiciary which protects the freedom of speech, religion and other rights. That protection has been constantly expanded in recent years, and also strengthened. Public opinion, I think, is important in two ways. First, if public opinion understands the importance of the freedoms of speech, Press and political association, then there is less danger that the executive branch will attempt to suppress civil liberties because public opinion can operate as a check. Then, the second way in which public opinion is desperately important is to support the judgments of the judiciary. A court, as you know, has no power to enforce its decrees against the executives, no physical powers, no powers of the purse to cut off money. Ultimately, it is public opinion supporting a judicial decree which makes the written Constitution and the judiciary protectors of civil liberties.

"This was very important in the case of the Watergate matter. You will remember that President Nixon, when he was ordered to turn over the tapes, said that he would not comply with the

Civil Liberties



By A. G. NOORANI

court order. There was no way in which the court could make him do that. It was a matter of great worry to me that he might successfully defy the court because if he did then the weakness of the judiciary would be exposed and who could tell how often judicial decrees would be violated in the future. But the American people understood that a free society and their liberties rest on the rule of law enforced by the court and within 72 hours the outcry of public opinion forced President Nixon to comply with the court's order and I think that the rule of law was greatly strengthened by that experience."

So the lesson is that for effective judicial check you need also strong public opinion which would sustain the judicial check; that exclusive reliance on the judiciary is counter-productive? "Well, the public must understand what the judiciary is doing. The public must understand that the judiciary is protecting it. After all, if you don't have freedom of speech and Press then there is no way of exposing corruption or abuses of power by the Government, no way of knowing how officials of the Government may, perhaps really be injuring the interest of the people. All this depends on debate and discussions. And it is very important that the public be educated to realise that. Judicial judgments can play a great part in educating the public to understand the importance of civil liberties. So, it is a sort of symbolic relation between the two."

The judiciary itself should then be scrupulously independent and impartial. "Absolutely. One of

the reasons for which the Supreme Court of the United States stands so high in the feelings of the American people is that the justices always have been—nearly always have been—scrupulously independent and have not been influenced by political loyalties and Party considerations and things of that kind." Weren't appointees to the US Supreme Court bench political, though there is the check of confirmation by the Senate? How effective has this check been? "It has prevented a number of appointments that would have been very bad. The important thing is even though an appointment may be made sometimes with political considerations in mind, once the man goes on the bench he is independent. Because on the bench he puts off all political loyalties, all political concerns...And I think this transformation is chiefly due to the tradition.

But it also means that once US judges reach the Supreme Court bench they do not aspire for any other job in the Government. "Oh, no, that is surely true. Indeed, very few of our justice ever leave the Supreme Court bench except when they become old and ill and are unable to carry on." So he disapproved of appointing retired Supreme Court judges to any executive post? "That would be against our tradition. Personally I would disapprove of it very strongly."

Have there been any cases where judges have gone out of their way, either by letter or public speech, to please the President of the day? "I know of none. I know of none. And certainly a public letter would be very much disapproved." Or any political speech or speeches which smack of politics? "Our justices scrupulously avoid public comment on political issues."

There is also some controversy about the role of the judge on the bench. Should he be a 'legalist' or an 'activist'? "Now that is a very difficult question. I think a judge on the bench faces a dilemma. He is charged with deciding according to the law and not according to his personal opinions. So on that side it is his duty to be a legalist. On the other hand, the law must change and grow to meet the needs of the society and society's needs change and develop. So that the judge, even while he is bound by law, must also take social needs into account and the great judge somehow manages to avoid both horns of the dilemma. He is an activist in part, but he tries to maintain and continue the tradition."

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REVIEW books

Populism wasn't everything

By VIVEK SENGUPTA

PAKISTAN's tragedy has of course been the failure first of centralised Party politics and thereafter of Parliamentary democracy and the ready and frequent introduction of martial law. A comparable tragedy has been that of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He was the only Pakistani leader who enjoyed mass adulation of the sort the Father of the Nation, Quaid-I-Azam Jinnah received. After the trauma of 1971 he pulled the shattered and dismembered nation out of the woods and was in the process of giving it a stable democratic polity when he ruined it all by rigging an election which his PPP (Pakistan People's Party) was bound, anyway, to win. The generals who disregarded world opinion and hanged him manifestly did so to safeguard their own regime. But, unwittingly, they turned him into a martyr and the spirit of the dead Bhutto will haunt Pakistan's destiny for decades to come.

Salmaan Taseer is a chartered accountant who is also a journalist. He met Bhutto as a student in London in 1966 just after he had quit Ayub's Cabinet: "His youthfulness, his rhetorical powers, his fashionable Left-wing views and his fervent Pakistani nationalism all served to captivate me." Charmed, he joined the PPP and became a Party functionary. And now he has produced a brilliant fact-packed political biography of his hero, always careful not to gloss over the many failings of this multi-faceted statesman.

Like many other Third World leaders, Bhutto came from an affluent background. He was a Sindhi *wadera* (feudal landlord) and imbibed the ways of Sindhi feudal politics—"inter-family squabbles, land disputes and intrigues...a proclivity for apparently senseless vendettas, grand gestures, an exaggerated insistence on the debt of friendship, and an atavistic recalling of past feuds and links. His father Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto was a stalwart of Sind politics. His signal contribution to the creation of Pakistan was his successful fight for the separation of the Muslim-majority Sind from the erstwhile Bombay presidency.

Shahnawaz raised Zulfikar (called after Caliph Hazrat Ali's sword) as his political heir and gave him the best of education—Cathedral School, Bombay, Berkeley and Oxford. In his student days Bhutto shone as a politically aware debater and, in his views, was firmly nationalistic and Islam-oriented.

After six years abroad, Bhutto returned home in 1953, determined to make a career in politics. These were the years of greatest political flux in Pakistan. Between April 1953 and the martial law of October 1958 it had as many as five Prime Ministers. During these early years, while practising as a lawyer, Bhutto concentrated on developing political contacts. He came particularly close to H. S. Suhrawardy and Iskander Mirza. It was under Iskander's patronage that in 1957 he made his debut in the United Nations (at the General Assembly). In later years, Bhutto was to make repeated appearances at the UN, delivering some of the most soporific theatrical addresses that were ever made there. They were revolting but the masses back home loved him for them.

With Tashkent Bhutto metamorphosed into a populist politician. In June 1966 Ayub sent off his new adversary on long leave. He discovered himself the night he took the Khyber Mail from Rawalpindi for Larkana. At every small station throughout the summer night huge crowds gathered to greet and garland him. Bhutto now knew where his power base lay. In subsequent years, he was to make full use of the masses in the classic fashion of Mark Antony.

A CONCOMITANT of his populism was his adoption of a Leftist stance. He combined his brand of socialism with a paradoxical relish for the intrigues of the feudal politics of Pakistan. Unwilling to share the platform with others, he started his own Party (PPP). His unanimous election as Chairman was the only election ever held in that Party. Writes Taseer: "His domination of the Party exceeded even that of Jinnah over the Muslim League...and yet because of its domination by Bhutto, it remained his creature and its very existence depended on him personally."

The anti-Ayub movement spearheaded by Bhutto led to the martial law regime of Yahya Khan. In the 1970 elections—the first direct polls at the national level—the PPP bagged West Pakistan while Mujib's Awami League won in the East to the extent that it could form a government on its own. But Bhutto would not let that be. Taseer does a fairly competent job of diluting Bhutto's guilt for the subsequent dismemberment of Pakistan. However, he does own that being the cleverest—political or otherwise—of the three protagonists Bhutto ought to have known the consequences of his stand. "Yet Bhutto's role in the breakup of Pakistan stopped short of active connivance with the army...Mujibur Rahman never accused Bhutto (of that)." But, significantly, Bhutto withheld the report of the Hameedur Rahman Commission, which he had himself appointed to probe Pakistan's dismemberment.

The birth of Bangladesh saw Bhutto taking over as President of the truncated Pakistan. He set the broken nation on its feet, galvanised the masses, was responsible for initiating work on the Pakistani Bomb, gave the country a constitution and ordered elections which he won. At the same time, he began by retaining martial law. He set up horrendous "security" and intelligence organisations manned by thugs who showed up for what they were by turning approvers during Bhutto's trial. He indulged in personal vendettas, persecution and bounding of foes political or otherwise.

In foreign policy, he abandoned confrontation with India and was now all for conciliation. Taseer regards the Simla Accord as Bhutto's personal triumph. But, if Bhutto returned from Simla with Pakistan's territory and self-respect intact, credit must also go to Mrs Gandhi that she did not allow Simla to turn into another Versailles, for well it might have—she was at the height of her power then.

Bhutto, for all his likenesses with Mrs Gandhi—both being populist, strongly nationalistic authoritarian leaders—had not much more regard for her than Yahya ("That woman"): "With all her saris, the red spot on her forehead, her little smile, she'll never succeed in impressing me...a diligent drudge of a schoolgirl, a woman devoid of initiative and imagination...I can't believe she succeeded in getting that degree in history at Oxford. I completed a three-year course at Oxford in two years and in three years she was not capable of finishing the course." In public meetings the showman Bhutto regaled his audiences with ribald lampoons of Mrs G and on one occasion after Ayub sent him on long leave indulged in double entendre saying: "I am not supposed to be in good health but I can assure you, no matter how poor my health, it is good enough for Indira Gandhi."

There can be no two ways about the fact that the PPP rigged the 1977 elections. Bhutto admitted as much but in handling the opposition agitation Bhutto displayed none of the political astuteness for which he was well known. It was ironical that he was overthrown by General Zia whom he had appointed Chief of Staff over the heads of several officers and whose family was sent to America at state expense by Bhutto to enable the treatment of his mentally retarded child.

Was Bhutto guilty of the murder of the father of Ahmed Raza Khan Kasuri, a renegade PPP member and the Raj Narain of Pakistan? At worst, he might have been an abettor through he was described the "principal accused". In any event, Taseer contends that he ought to have fought his persecution politically: "Allowing himself to fall into courts and legal cases was one of his biggest blunders." Mrs Gandhi had that wisdom; he had not. He paid for it with his life.

Being a Vikas publication, the book does not disappoint, although proofing errors abound.

Bhutto, a political biography, by Salman Taseer, Vikas, Rs 60

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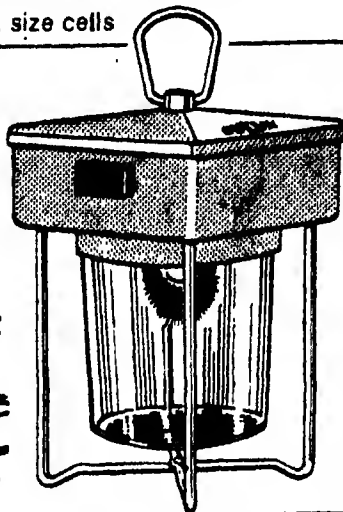
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THE WORLD

Lying down on the job

Well, one thing is for sure. The two in the picture don't get easily rattled by people around them. The young couple on the Fort Lauderdale beach (or should we say on a towel on the beach) are two college students who are making the most of their annual spring break. And, by appearances, enjoying it too. This south Florida town is a popular rendezvous point for students, an estimated 250,000 of whom make the trip every year in groups or singly. And sometimes, may we add, in pairs.



Slim chance

Dr Galina Shatalova, a Moscow woman doctor, is famous. She no longer is. The doctor is believed to be the creator of a diet which not only cures the sick but manages to "turn martyrs into happy, smiling people". Her diet created such a stir that a special medical council was set up to study it. That was last year when cases of diabetes, asthma and allergy diseases were surprisingly cured when those afflicted started taking Dr Shatalova's diet. Then someone somewhere sat up. And the Presidium of the Scientific Medical Council of the USSR Ministry of Public Health began conducting studies on the wonder drug. The Presidium, comprising of diet specialists and "food therapists" published their findings in the Russian magazine, *Health*. Dr Shatalova's wonder diet bubble was burst and the experts claimed there was "nothing new" about it. They also criticised the woman doctor's proposal of reducing the daily calorie intake to 1,000 along with 20 grams of proteins. According to them, it was unacceptable and without any scientific basis. As such she had said that she was against human beings consuming meat more than twice a week. This was so because humans were descended from vegetarians and naturally were better equipped to live on vegetables. The doctor maintains that vegetables should, therefore, either be eaten raw or lightly boiled. But the best cures for diseases are dandelion leaves. Long live leaf power!

Bordering on the impossible

Escaping from Hungary may not be much of a problem if you know long-distance lorry driver, Brian Clark, from Langford, Nottinghamshire in Britain. He helped a Hungarian family to come out of Hungary last year. Hungarian Ljos "Frank" Schusztar, a welder and his two daughters, Gabriella and Ildiko were smuggled out in tool boxes attached to the bottom of the lorry. Mr Clark however,

claimed that he had not broken Hungarian law since the family was not in his vehicle when it was crossing the border.

Mr Clark's duty has once again called him to Hungary to collect a cargo of textiles. And he went in spite of all the pleas made by Hungarians not to go back to their country. They fear that he will be arrested for aiding and abetting people to escape.

Pope on a rope



Terminal Fury. That's what actor Steve McQueen suffered from when he read a story in the *National Enquirer*, America's highest-selling tabloid which said that he was suffering from terminal lung cancer. The 40-year-old star was almost apoplectic with wrath. "It's ridiculous, a cruel lie" the

star ranted. And he means business too. The paper, which is bought by nearly five million Americans, is going to be in deep waters soon, as McQueen plans to file a multi-million dollar lawsuit.

But the owner-publisher, Generoso Pope, doesn't seem to be too worried yet, even though other showbiz cases amount to a grand total of more than \$30 million. Among others who have been outraged is actress Carol Burnett who wants £4.5 million damages because the *Enquirer* claimed she had a drunken set-to in a Washington restaurant with Henry Kissinger, then dumped a glass of wine over a guest. Then there is veteran actor Rory Calhoun who has filed a suit for an identical sum over a story saying he too had cancer. "A lie," he explained, "that cost me four TV roles because producers didn't want me dying on their sets."

Cries, not for the Prize

Who are the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo? Often known as the Mad Mothers and Mad Women, this Argentinian group has been proposed for the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize. Their cause is justifiable. All they want is some information about their next of kin—brothers, fathers, sons, daughters or husbands, who have been made to "disappear" as a consequence of the oppressive regime of General Jorge Videla (below). General Videla came to power following a military coup in March 1976. However, the Mothers will not get the award since the political issues involved



are only relevant to many of the Latin American countries. The proposal for the prize came during a conference of Latin American Intellectuals in Exile some months ago.

The Mothers' group is a leaderless one and their actions come through "gut reaction". They are campaigning for the 15,000 people (according to Amnesty International) who have "disappeared" in the repressive military regime. Till January 1978, every Thursday afternoon, the women gathered and marched slowly round the main square of Buenos Aires in front of the Government House to draw attention to their plight. They succeeded since they were ordered not to gather in the square again after January. But their spirits cannot be repressed, they meet in churches. The dictatorial regime has not stopped persecution. This time, however, their target is a different organisation—the Relatives of Persons Detained or Disappeared for Political Reasons.

Horsing around

At last Mrs Thatcher has found support for her Olympic boycott move. And it is from none other than the British Equestrian Federation, the only one of the four members of the British Olympic Association to support the boycott. This means that Captain Mark Phillips and Princess Anne, both members of the equestrian team, will not take part in the Moscow games. The decision of the Federation presents a difficulty for Prince Philip, a president of the International Equestrian Federation. He is supposed to attend the Games in his official capacity but now with a number of equestrian teams from many countries not taking part he is seriously considering if it would at all be worthwhile to make his presence felt in Moscow.



Prince Philip

Cross purposes

Crucifixion, it seems, is the "in" thing in the Philippines. In fact, over Easter three persons, among them one woman, were crucified. For the latter, 21-year-old Luciana Reyes it was the fourth time. Luciana believed she had seen and spoken to her creator. Accordingly, she wanted to undergo the same suffering as Jesus Christ: hence the crucifixion. So on April 4, in front of numerous zealots, they crucified her outside a church at Paombong. Those who witnessed the crucifixion could not restrain themselves and young and old alike rushed forward to wet their handkerchiefs in the blood which poured from the wounds on her palms. But she did not see either her blood or the people, since she fainted when the first nail was driven through one of her palms. She was, however, released from her agony after only 10 seconds.

Although Luciana was crucified alone she had company only 15 miles away. Two men were crucified, also for the fourth time in succession. But their reasons were totally different. For 31-year-old street hawker, Mario Bagtas, crucifixion was one way of thanking God for curing his wife of cancer. The second man, unemployed Alfredo Sunja, 28, had himself crucified hoping to have his brother healed of leukaemia.

Arch enemy

Since July 22, 1976, French Archbishop Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, has defied the authority of the Pope. He was suspended from his priestly duties by Pope Paul VI on that day almost four years ago. Undeterred, on April 7, 1980, the 74-year-old rebel priest created history by defying the Pope for the first time in his priestly capacity. On that day he celebrated the Tridentine mass in the Church of San Simeon Piccolo in Venice, even though the Tridentine Latin Mass was forbidden by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council in the Sixties. The Mass is said in Latin, which is the language of the Catholic Church. However, the Tridentine form of the Mass is forbidden since the priest stands in front of the altar with his back to the congregation. This is not done in the new Mass where the priest stands behind the altar.

Monsignor Lefebvre was asked by the Pope to reconsider his decision, but even after a seven-hour long period when he was questioned by the Vatican authorities the priest has not bent down. Instead, he has gone one step further: the Vatican, he said, contains "a nest of subversion and heresy". Since he "wanted to die a Christian" the Archbishop does not want to be a part of the Vatican.

Grave doubts

In a graveyard beside the River Irwell in Salford, England, there is a plain tombstone. The cross, which leans a little to one side, has an inscription that says "In memory of Prince Peter Lobengula". According to the inscription, he died on November 14, 1913, aged 38. Just who was this person with such a strange surname? According to Evelyn Vigeon, senior keeper in the Peel Park Museum at Salford, "He insisted with his dying breath that he was a king's son. But officialdom would not have it".

He could have been a prince for a King Lobengula of the Matabele was overthrown in 1893 by Cecil Rhodes and the survivors of his family were dispersed.

Peter Lobengula, it is known, came to Britain in 1899 with an exhibition called "Savage South Africa" which performed at Earl's Court, London and he played the part of the deposed king's son. After the show flopped, Peter ran off with a red-haired actress called Kitty, an Irish girl, although it is not known how he came to settle in Salford. More puzzling is how Peter, if he was indeed a prince, died of tuberculosis after working down a coalmine.

But that is not all. Arthur Chadzingwa, in London for ZAPU, the Zimbabwean political Party that is most dependent on Matabele support says, "If this truly was a son of Lobengula, his remains shall be taken back to his birthplace".

Moses proposes

Did the Chinese Cultural Revolution stamp out religion from the People's Republic of China? Not a chance. According to Bishop Moses P. Hsieh, a Chinese Anglican, "the people of China are thirsting for something spiritual". Christianity is spreading faster now than it did before 1949, when China turned to Communism. In Fukien province alone there are around 20,000 Christians. Attendance at one of the churches, the Flower Lane Protestant Church, has improved steadily and it has averaged

1,500 people since the church reopened last October. China, meanwhile, has been growing more liberal towards all religions and has allowed a few churches and mosques to open. Bishop Hsieh who lived in England from 1948 to 1950 might be a Maoist at heart—he wears a Mao jacket and boots—but he is a true bishop looking after the spiritual needs of his flock. His bishop's robes were confiscated during the Cultural Revolution but he hid two Bibles—now a forgotten commodity—a hymnal and a prayer book.

TV or not TV

That is the question. It all started with a two-hour documentary entitled "Death



Susan Abou Taleb

of a Princess", a British production which was recently screened at prime viewing time. The film is based on the real-life public execution of the Saudi princess Misha who, along with her lover, was found guilty of adultery. The princess was caught while trying to elope with the cousin of a Saudi ambassador. The part of the princess is played by Suzanne Abou Taleb in the ITV production. Although King Khaled is reported to have made a £5 million offer for the film to prevent its screening, it was turned down and the film shown. But there could be serious repercussions in store for Britain as the Saudis are threatening to break off diplomatic relations and suspend oil exports and contracts worth several millions of pounds.



Sunjay: A tiff with Papa Sunil



Tina: No coochie-cooing on the sets

"SHOTGUN" Sinha's latest pastime is to fire "blanks" at that tall wall, Amitabh Bachchan. And not many seem pleased with it. Recently, on the sets of *Naseeb*, Sunil is supposed to have deliberately muffed up his steps to irritate the impeccable and stylish Amitabh. But the fact is that Shatru can't take two steps on the dance floor with grace and perfection. Rajesh Khanna too has the same "problem". The two can flail their arms and swing their hips in a song sequence but they cannot match the skill of Shashi Kapoor, Mithun or even Danny. No wonder, Shatru flunked his steps on the sets of *Naseeb* and unsettled his co-star Amitabh rather badly. Amitabh's wife, Jaya Bhaduri, I can remember, couldn't dance to save her life. She made an utter mess of the dance sequences in *Bansi Birju* and *Ek Nazar*

but no one dared to say anything because it was Jaya Bhaduri!

JUST when you thought that everything was fine with Danny, look what's happened. His girl Kim is reported to have walked out on him and the object of her fancy is a most unlikely person—Mamohan Desai, who has given her a big break in his mammoth venture *Naseeb*. If this is true, Kim probably doesn't know that in Desai's film she will only be one among really big stars like Hema, Reena Roy and others. But in Danny's film, she will be the sole heroine, and look, if it weren't for him, she would still be knocking around. For once Kim should be grateful to Danny for casting her opposite Rajesh Khanna.

DESPITE the fabulous advance reports, *The Burning Train* has turned out

to be a damp squib. Are all disaster movies heading for disaster? Simple love tales, like *Khushoorat* and *Khwab* seem to have caught the fancy of all movie-goers.

A certain amount of tension is to be expected when a father directs a film starring his son. Especially so, when the father is still handsome and attractive to women and for the son it is a maiden venture. Sunil Dutt is directing *Rocky* in which his son Sunjay is cast and despite it being a family affair, occasional tiffs crop up. For instance, Sunil is an old-fashioned father and does not approve of the coochie-cooing that Tina and Sunjay may want to indulge in, being the young uninhibited lovers they are!

FINALLY an actress has come along who can fill Jaya Bhaduri's place in the film industry; she matches Jaya in looks and

acting talent. The sweet, charming girl can even prove better than Jaya. This girl, Deepu Naval has arrived with *Ek Baar Phir* and even if the film does not fare well at the box-office, Deepu's class cannot go unnoticed. She needs the right type of films to project her image and an imaginative film maker should soon give her the right break. Parveen, Ranjeeta and other aspiring actresses should watch out.

EVEN if Zarina Wahab isn't exactly number one on the silver screen, she is certainly doing pretty well on the sidelines. One gets to see her at all the important functions and parties. She is always present at programmes arranged by various groups for raising funds for charities and recently made a trip out to Dubai with her "close friend" Shabana Azmi. To an intent and purposes the trip was a great success and Zarina came back looking very happy and yes, slightly heavier than she was when she left. Now she self-consciously pats her extra weightage and says she is going to knock it all off in a hurry. Now that will take some doing!



Zarina: second best

R. Nagai

Shivrajn Gulvadi

SHE wore outrageous, flimsy clothes and a weird hair style in her maiden him *Aaravam*, a Malayalam soft porno directed by Bharatan. Just out of the school then, Suchitra went through her "sexy" role with carefree abandon. In one of the "famous" scenes in the film, she was asked to rush through a stream and all that she had to do was to lift her dress upto her knees. Unit members recall that Suchitra lifted her dress up to her navel and rushed through the water. The cameraman and the director had to remind Suchitra that the censors won't pass the scene. A bit of modesty was accordingly injected in the next shot. Throughout the shooting of *Aaravam*, Suchitra must have been too conscious that she was the second heroine of the film and that heroine Premila was expected to steal the limelight. Well, *Aaravam* wasn't a hit and Premila didn't exactly create a stir, never mind all those close-ups of her boobs. And Suchitra too didn't become a success overnight. Recently she changed her name to Maya and currently she is busy shopping for "sexy ones". She has a couple of Tamil films on hand, one of them opposite popular music director Ganesh who's playing the lead role for the first time. Maya isn't exactly in the lead: another newcomer Pournami is, but Maya's scintillating dances are expected to be the highlight of the film. Maya says she's prepared to do any damn thing as long as the script demands it (haven't we heard this already?). Some studio-hands believe that she'll soon replace Jayamalini as the omph girl. Well, it won't be all that easy. Jayamalini is the Helen of the south and she is still as good as any dancer.

SRIVIDYA wasn't really bad in her recent Tamil film *Ivargal Vithyasamam*. Her eyes can still get you on fire though she seems to have lost interest in getting rid of her spare ribs. The modest success of this film may not get her more assignments in Tamil but she's quite happy with Malayalam films. "She's a terrific actress and quite



Kamalahasan in "Hell"

cooperative", says producer M. O. Joseph who has just signed her to play the lead in his new film *Amman*. The film will be directed by Harihan who seems to have replaced I. V. Sasi as the most sought after director in Malayalam films.

TELUGU actors often prompt their producers to entitle a film after their names. Many films of N. T. Rama Rao have the word Rama or Ramu thrown in: *Challenge Ramudu* is just one example. And now Krishna is acting in *Kiladi Krishnudu*. A newcomer Madhubala, is paired with him. Wife Vijayanirmala directs the film.

ONE thought that Vijayan and Saritha would be able to attract enough

viewers to make any film a success. The producers of the Tamil film *Sri Devi* think otherwise; they feel that the presence of a chimpanzee will increase the popularity of the film. The chimp is featured in a couple of song sequences too—one doesn't know whether the chimp gets the chance to sing. The previous film made by the same concern had a donkey doing all sorts of things. The film also had a washerwoman heroine who showed her cleavage generously—and with great aplomb. Saritha may not be all that willing!

SRIPRIYA is once again paired with Sivaji Ganesan in an upcoming Tamil film *Sangili* which is a remake of *Kancharan*. This means that Sivaji will play a dual role—a notorious gangster and a police officer. Which also means that Sivaji will have an opportunity to indulge in verbal hysteria. *Sumitra* is also cast in the film. This role should do her career a world of good.

PIOUSJI



Radhika



HYDERABAD: A teacher pestered endlessly by a student wanting to know his rating in the public administration paper of the first semester examination, lost his temper, shouted at the latter to leave him alone and bit him. This was on Monday (March 31). The student did leave him alone, only to return the following day, with a dozen teethmashing students and beat up the teacher. The teacher, who is also chief warden of the hostels, has been admitted to hospital. Eleven hostel wardens have threatened to resign unless the defaulting boys are booked. Vice-Chancellor Ram Reddy has directed the principal of the concerned college to inquire into the incident and punish the guilty—*The Hindustan Times* (Rajendra Singh Batra, Allahabad)

UNNAO: D. S. N. College, the only post-graduate college of Unnao district (UP) has been closed since die by the principal following an hour-long exchange of fire between two groups of students in the college campus on Tuesday (March 25). The exchange of the fire had also taken place on Friday following a row between the warring groups over two girl students—*The Times of India* (P. S. Gadgil, Nagpur)

HUNSUR: A public examination began one hour late for want of question papers. The students of first B.A. who were taking their annual English examination on April 2 at the MFC College centre here, had this rather unusual experience. It is reported that Mysore University had not sent the question papers to the centre. When this was realised at the eleventh hour, the college principal sent a person to another college to get one question paper which was then cyclostyled and distributed to the students. In the same centre, first B.A. and B.Com (MR) students received English question papers, some printed and some cyclostyled. The university, it is said, had sent both printed and cyclostyled copies. But students allege that in the cyclo-

styled copies the name of the university was missing, though the questions themselves were similar. The principal of the college has reported the matter to the university—*Indian Express* (K. S. Soma Sunder, Bangalore)

LUDHIANA: Hundreds of people yesterday (April 2) witnessed a unique phenomenon—saffron (kesar) rain over and around Atam Bhavan on Shivala Saglanwana Road where a leading Jain saint Mahasati Lejyyawati is lying on her death bed. Eye-witnesses said that a seven-colour circle was witnessed around the sun at midday and a few minutes later saffron rain started and it fell on several buildings including Atam Bhavan. A PTI correspondent rushed to the spot and saw several women collecting wet saffron. Spots of wet saffron could also be seen on various buildings—*The Hindustan Times* (Partho Bhattacharya, New Delhi)

TIRUCHI: Traffic was paralysed for nearly an hour and a half at Thalavapalayam village on the Karur-Salem road in Karur taluk last evening (April 1). A crowd of local villagers protested against the posting of a Harijan sub-postmaster for the village post office. The crowd consisted of caste Hindus. The crowd also protested against any move to shift the post-office to the Harijan street in the village. It is said that the village post-office in Thalavapalayam village is functioning in the residence of a caste Hindu. Mr Ganesan, a Harijan who was posted as sub-postmaster for this post-office came yesterday (April 1) to take charge of his assignment. A crowd of more than 200 caste Hindus was said to have prevented him from taking charge. They also objected to the move to shift the post-office to a Harijan street. The new sub-postmaster could not take charge—*Indian Express* (L. Thiruvaramangal, Salem)

UJJAIN: Sadhus performing various Yogic feats are drawing large crowds in the Kumbh fair here. Whether it be Yoga, Hathyoga, Samudhi or meditation, these sadhus seldom fail to catch the attention of the pilgrims here. Two sadhus—Dalbir Gir and Tulsidas Khandesari—are said to have been on their feet for the last nine and five years respectively. Subsisting only on fruits and light diet, they intend remaining in the same posture for many more years to come. Mahant Vijayendra Puri of North Kashi claims to have been keeping his right hand raised for the last eight months. When approached, he said he would continue doing that for 12 years. This was his way of praying to God for welfare of the human being, the 50-year-old sadhu said—*The Hindustan Times* (Rashmi Gupta, Rishikesh)

THE Hindu society is not the monopoly of caste Hindus—Jagjivan Ram

Till we promised him (Jagjivan Ram) Prime Ministership, and elections were held, he considered us good people but now as we lost the elections, people did not vote for him, we are bad—A. B. Vajpayee

BABU Jagjivan Ram has become a symbol of the law of diminishing returns in Indian politics. In three years, the five-star hero has become an expendable extra—Mainstream

THE Congress (I) wants to throw us out of the Government in our State. We also want to throw out the Congress (I) from the Centre. This is legitimate enough. But why the hurry? There is no need to get impatient about it, nor is violence necessary—Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal at the CMs' conference in New Delhi

THE previous Government resembled a buffet dinner party. There were no chairs, no places for each person—everyone just came and took whatever they could get—Zail Singh, Union Home Minister

HE (Sanjay Gandhi) is basically a Leftist—Vasudeva Pannicker, Youth Congress general secretary

THE family planning programme will never be a programme of our Party as long as the people do not want it—Sanjay Gandhi

DO I look like a goonda or a rapist to you? Thanks to the Press, even some of my close friends have started to believe these wild tales—Jagdish Tytler, Congress (I) MP and Delhi Youth Congress chief quoted in Illustrated Weekly

If we do not serve the people, we have no right to be in power—Zail Singh

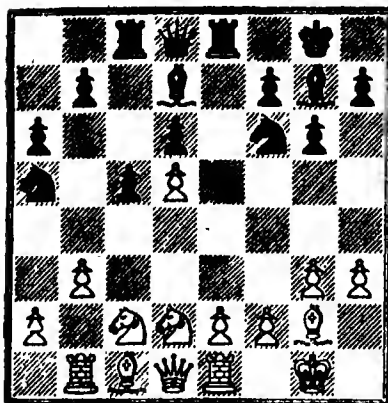
CHARAN SINGH is the worst leader I have come across. He is slow of mind, indecisive, authoritarian—much more than Mrs Gandhi—Raj Narain quoted in Current

If the Soviets succeed in taking effective control of the Persian Gulf, Europe and Japan will be at their mercy—and mercy is not one of their most notable virtues—Richard Nixon

TODAY, how things have changed! A 12-year-old not only knows what lesbianism is, but understands its practice—Ismat Chughtai, Urdu authoress on the stir which her short story *Lihaf* created

chess

Sax (Black) to move



Donner (White)

Position after White's 15th move.

IBM 1979

The IBM Tournament in Amsterdam this summer ended in a tie for first place between Vlastimil Hort of Czechoslovakia and Gyula Sax of Hungary. For Hort it was, surprisingly enough, only his first tournament victory in Holland despite numerous appearances in Dutch Tournaments over the years, which only goes to show just how strong these events really are. For Sax too the result must have been particularly pleasing, as he was on his honeymoon.

Without doubt Sax is one of the most exciting players in the world. His scintillating play in the last Olympiad in Buenos Aires was one of the foundations of the Hungarian victory there. His style can best be described by saying that, if he were a boxer, he would be said to carry a very heavy punch indeed. I give as an illustration his game against the Dutch grandmaster Jan Hein Donner. Donner is quite a character, the Inspector Clouseau of the chessboard, combining as he does the inspired and the absurd with such delightful conviction. His coups in Amsterdam included coming to the opening ceremony 10 minutes after its conclusion and arriving for his game against the Czech grandmaster Jan Smekal a mere 24 hours after its scheduled start. In each case he was quite convinced of the accuracy of his own timekeeping. In the following encounter Donner's logic is no match for Sax's punch. White: J.H. Donner. Black: G. Sax. IBM Tournament, Amsterdam 1979. King's Indian Defence; Panno Variation.

1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-KN3; 3. P-KN3, B-N2; 4. B-N2, O-O; 5. N-KB3, P-Q3; 6. O-O, N-B3; 7. P-Q5, N-ON4; 8. KN-Q2, P-B4; 9. N-R3? According to Donner the development of the knight on QB3 is 'illogical' as it will later become a target as Black develops pressure on the long diagonal. To a large extent this is true, but still the move 9. N-R3 smacks of artificiality. 9... P-K3; 10. R-N1, P x P; 11. P x P, P-QR3; 12. N-B2, B-Q2! Donner was waiting for 12... P-QN4; 13. P-QN4! P x P; 14. N x P and the knight comes to B6. 13. P-N3, R-B1; 14. P-KR3, R-K1; 15. R-K1, (DIAGRAM) P-B6! Powerful play. If 16. P-QN4, then 16... P-B6! 17. P x N, P x N; 18. B x P, B-R5! 19. R-QB1, N-K5. 20. B x N, R x B; and R(5)-QB5. 18. P x P, N x P; 17. R-N4, N-N3; 18. R-Q4, N-R5! Black's domination of the game is complete. He even threatens to

checkmate the white queen with 2... N-B6. 19. N-N1, Q-N3; 20. B-K3, Q-N7; 21. N(2)-R3 Poor knight! It would have done better to start its career on QB3 after all. 21... N-B6; 22. N x N, Q x N (R6); 23. N-N1, Q x P; 24. B-B4, N-R4; 25. R-Q2, Q-R8; and White resigned. The immediate threat is 26... B-R5 and after 26... P-K3, N x B; 27. NP x N (or 27. KP x N, R x R+ 28 Q x R, B-B6!) B-N7!, the threats of R-B8 end... B-B8 are murderous.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



Problem 1 Game all, the bidding goes.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
No	No	No	1♥
?		dbia	No

South holds:
 ♠A8 ♥A1064 ♦O5 ♣OJ973
 How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 1NT, (c) 2NT, (d) 3♣, (e) 3NT?

Problem 2 N-S game, the bidding goes.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	1♠	No	2♠
No	No	2NT	No
?			

North-South are not playing negative doubles (if they were, the failure to make a negative double would have some bearing). South holds:

♠8742 ♥J985 ♦AQ ♣AK2
 How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 3♣, (c) 3♦, (d) 3♥, (e) 4♥?

Problem 3 Game all, the bidding goes.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♠	No	No
—	No	2♣	2♦
?			

South holds:
 ♠A75 ♥K109 ♦KQ10 ♣K1074
 How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 2♠, (c) 2NT, (d) 3♣, (e) 3NT?

Problem 4 Love all, the bidding goes.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
No	3♣	dbia	No
?			

South holds:
 ♠8752 ♥J103 ♦A108 ♣A54
 How many points out of 5 would you award to (a) Pass, (b) 3♣, (c) 3NT, (d) 4♣, (e) 4♠?

Problem 5 Game all, the bidding goes.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	No	3NT	No
No	No		

♠Q
 ♥KJ5
 ♦Q108842
 ♣982

♠J109642
 ♥Q93
 ♦AK
 ♣Q5

West leads ♠J, East plays the 5 and South the 7. On a low diamond from dummy East plays the 3 and South the Jack. How should West plan the defence?

TERENCE REESE

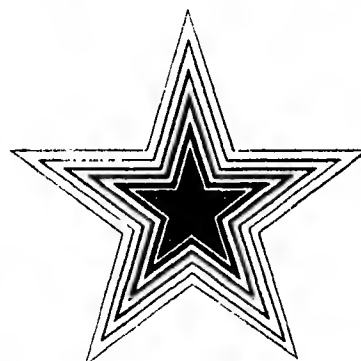
stamps



ES each for the first three correct solutions opened.

Not so much a hes-been as a never-was, this spool stamp was featured in *The Postage Stamp*, a philatelic journal now defunct, in December 1911. At that time its meaning was plain, and the event is still important today, but does anyone now remember?

- (a) whose was the portrait?
 (b) what was the significance of his costume?
 (c) what event in 1911 prompted the 'issue'?



SINCE 1969 the Channel islands of Guernsey and Jersey have been running their own postal services and issuing stamps of their own. To mark the tenth anniversary of 'postal independence' Guernsey has issued four stamps featuring different sections of the post office. This 15p stamp shows staff at work in the Philatelic Bureau, which was opened in 1971 to cater for the increasing number of collectors of Guernsey stamps. It now has almost 37,000 deposit account holders, including well over a thousand each in the United States, Canada and West Germany. A quarterly news-letter giving details of new issues and the first day cover service can be obtained from the Philatelic Bureau, Head Post Office, Guernsey, Channel Islands. New stamps planned for 1980 include a series to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Guernsey police force and three high values for the definitive series featuring Guernsey coins.

C. W. HILL

Beginning April 27

This week the Sun is in Aries, Venus is in Taurus, and Jupiter, Mars and Saturn are conjoined in Leo. Neptune and Uranus are in Scorpio, Ketu is in Aquarius and Mercury alone is in Pisces. The Moon will be moving through Libra and Scorpio from Virgo.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) This week will prove to be happy and moderately fortunate provided you are able to check extravagant tendencies. A beneficial change of job or residence is likely. An elderly lady will prove very helpful. This week is particularly favourable for sports, speculative ventures, investments and travel. Domestic affairs augur well. Good dates: 28, 29 and 30. Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 7. Favourable direction: South.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) Be on your guard against deception. Avoid quarrels at all costs, and do not make needless changes of any kind. This week will surely bring some good fortune. You are likely to encounter severe competition on the business front. Your private life may pose a few problems. Social activities must be reduced to the minimum. Pay more attention to business details and take the advice of elders and family friends. Good dates: 27, 29, 1 and 2. Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 10. Favourable direction: West.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) Your professional and financial affairs prosper exceedingly and a promotion is far from improbable. Travel and push business to the utmost. Take reasonable risks and forge ahead on all fronts. Letters from distant places will bring good news. Friends of the opposite sex may prove very troublesome. Keep your temper under control and curb all erratic tendencies. Seek the advice of elders and family friends. Good dates: 28, 1, 2 and 3. Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9. Favourable direction: South-east.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Be careful not to displease your employer or chief. Pay attention to business details and take the advice of elders. A new friendship will provide encouragement. This week is not favourable for love and romance. You will gain in diverse ways. Good dates: 27, 1, 3 and 4. Lucky numbers: 1 and 4. Favourable direction: North.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) A valuable new friendship may develop. You will experience a welcome change for the better. Gain through romance, children and speculative ventures are predicted. Let your own intuition guide you under the present circumstances. You may benefit through secret information or association. Your strength of character should help you to get over a number of problems. Publicity or social prominence will bring you unexpected profits. Good dates: 27, 28, 29 and 2. Lucky numbers: 2, 11 and 10. Favourable direction: West.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) This is going to be a moderately fortunate week for you. Let your intuition guide you. For servicemen a promotion will crown a successful week. Your business affairs are likely to prosper. At the weekend be a little more careful in all your dealings. Love and matrimonial affairs will bring good fortune. Good dates: 28, 1, 2 and 3. Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 7. Favourable direction: North-west.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) Be prepared for delays in business and domestic affairs. Take nothing for granted, especially where property and females are concerned. You will gain by your own hard work and enterprise. Differences with business partners should be amicably settled. A secret association will prosper. Pay a little extra attention to health. For servicemen, a promotion is on the cards. Good dates: 29, 30, 1 and 3. Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9. Favourable direction: South-East.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) This is going to be a very lucky week. Your cherished goals will soon be achieved. Push all your ventures to the utmost. Business partners and spouses will play an exceptionally big part in your life. An important journey is foreseen. Some opposition from an elderly relative or associate, is likely. Good dates: 28, 29, 31 and 1. Lucky numbers: 6 and 3. Favourable direction: North.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) This week is exceptionally lucky. If you can concentrate on your professional work, success is assured. Take every possible advantage of existing favourable influences. Follow your own hunches. This week will pass off very smoothly. Some unreasonable opposition on the part of an old person of the opposite sex is to be expected at the weekend. Check all extravagant tendencies. Good dates: 29, 30, 1 and 2. Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8. Favourable direction: South.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) Practice tact and discretion in all your dealings. Legal problems can be averted if you keep your temper under control. You need mental peace at the moment. Cultivate young rather than old persons. Property deals should be postponed. Although your recent difficulties will gradually cease to worry you, you will continue to experience minor problems. A secret matter, perhaps a love affair, turns to your advantage. Good dates: 1, 2 and 3. Lucky numbers: 5, 9 and 11. Favourable direction: North.

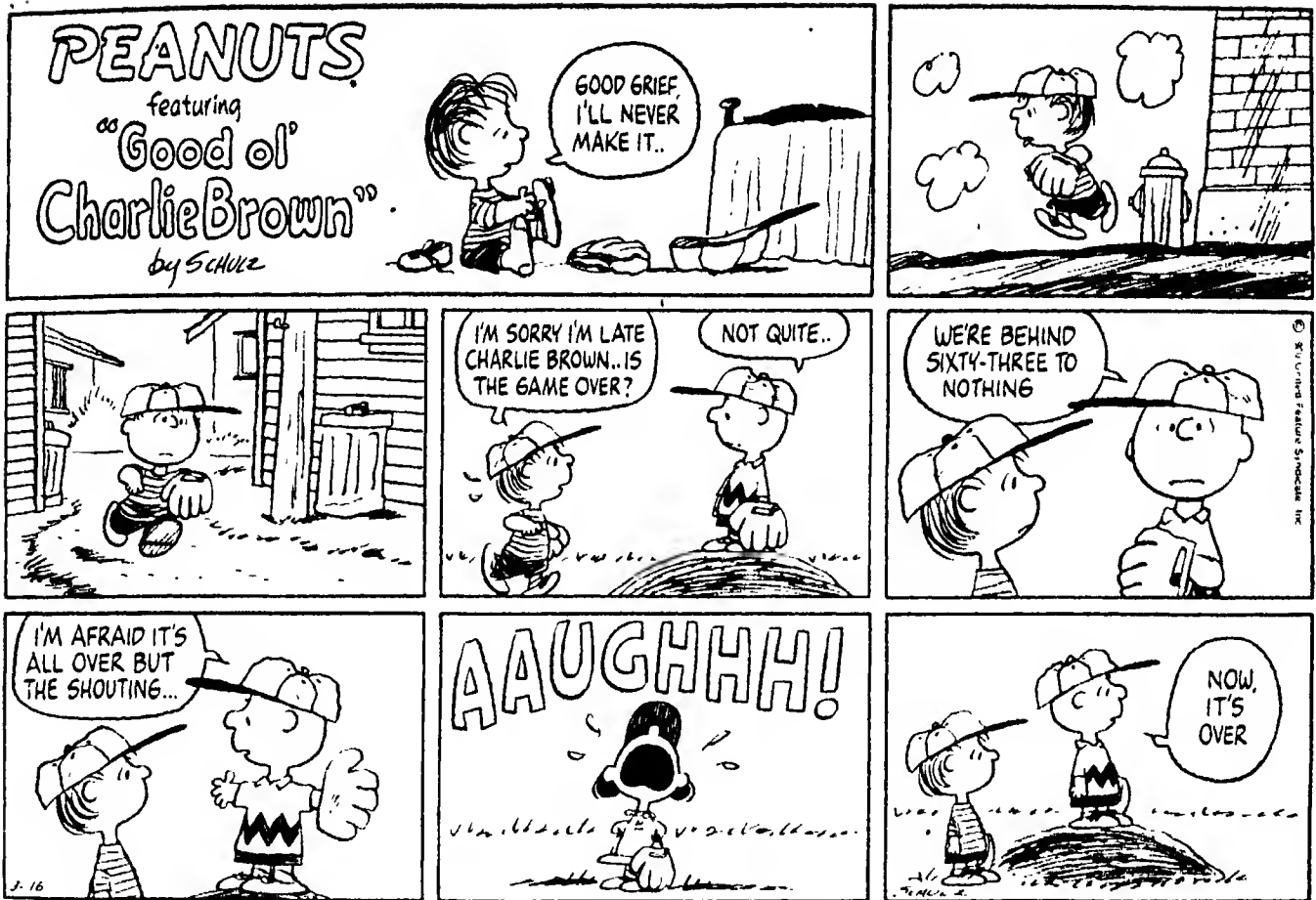


AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) A mixed grill is your portion. You are advised to exercise tact and restraint in order to avoid a quarrel. Apart from minor disagreements with an old person, this week is moderately fortunate. In many cases, hard work and application will lead to a promotion. Take all reasonable risks and forge ahead. Good dates: 30, 2 and 3. Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 9. Favourable direction: East.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) Be on your guard against deception. Conserve your recent gains and do not be extravagant. Some people will be promoted. On the domestic front there are chances of a bereavement. Safeguard the health of your womenfolk. Good dates: 29, 30, 2 and 4. Lucky numbers: 7, 4 and 6. Favourable direction: South.

M. B. RAMAN




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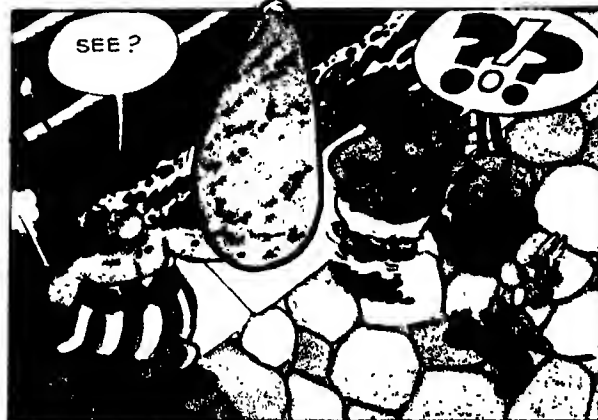
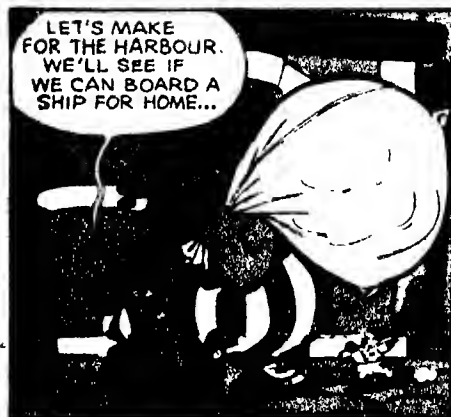
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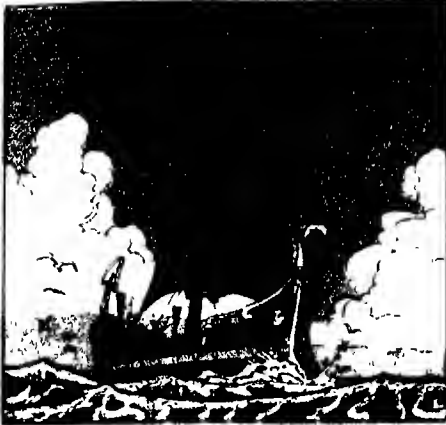
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YOU REALLY THINK WE MIGHT MEET PIRATES?



SURE ENOUGH, ON BOARD ANOTHER SHIP...

AFTER OUR LAST FIGHT, ERIX, WE HAD TO DO AN HONEST JOB OF WORK AND SAVE UP FOR A NEW BOAT... WE HAVEN'T FINISHED PAYING OFF THE INSTALMENTS YET, SO HERE'S HOPING FOR A VICTIM!

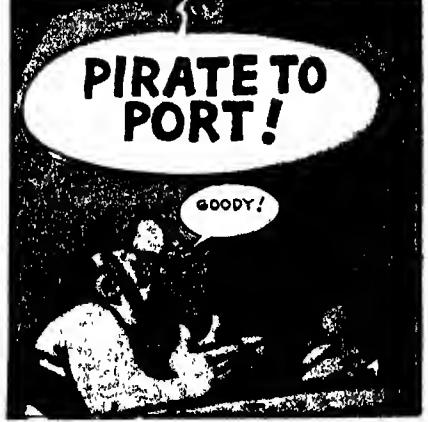


VICTIM TO STARBOARD!



PIRATE TO PORT!

GOODY!



RIGHT, LADS, NOW TAKE IT EASY. DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH! WE MUSTN'T FAIL THIS TIME!



WHY... IT'S... IT'S THEM AGAIN!



GO ABOUT! QUICK, QUICK! GO ABOUT!



BUT TOO LATE...

VICTRIX CAUSA DIIS PLACUIT, SED VICTA CATONI.

I DON'T GO OVERBOARD FOR YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR. YOU'D BETTER GO ABOUT LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB!



RESIDENCIES

HOW did the British react to the class distinction in the bureaucracy? Evidence of this is available from one of the drawings displayed at the "Making of New Delhi" exhibition which was organised on the golden jubilee of the founding of the eighth city of Delhi, which became the seat of British power in India. Sir Edward Lutyens, the chief architect of the new city, had in a rough sketch described the three categories of public servants for whom he had to design houses — thin blacks, thin whites and fat whites — meaning the lower level Indian officials, the lower level British officials and the senior British officials, respectively. The amount of planning that went into the making of the city is also evident in the sketch, which shows provisions made for peepal, neem and jamun trees. Incidentally, two houses meant for 'fat whites' which were used as the model for the rest of the houses of that category were 10, Queensway (now Janpath) and 6, Hastings Road (now Krishna Menon Marg). 10, Janpath was the office portion of Lal Bahadur Shastri's residential complex during his brief tenure as Prime Minister and later housed the Press Commission and the Indian Youth Congress during the Emergency. Now it is the residence of Vice-President Hidayatullah. And 6, Krishna Menon Marg, which originally was the residence of Sir Herbert Baker, Lutyens's assistant, has been for years occupied by Babu Jagjivan Ram. Houses do seem to get the residents they deserve.

YOUTHANASIA

THE Youth Congress (I), which had kept a low profile at the time of the distribution of tickets for the Lok Sabha elections, is actively in the fray for tickets for elections to the nine Assemblies. The UP unit has reportedly asked for 70 per cent of the seats in the State and the Maharashtra unit has put up a somewhat modest demand for 100 seats. But the Maharashtra boys have gone a step further and threatened that they would gherao the state election committee members if their demand was not met. To top it all, at a Press statement recently, they claimed that their plan had the approval of Youth Congress (I) president Ramchandra Rath and the MP from Amethi, Sanjay Gandhi.

RECEIVED WISDOM



Dharm Vir Jayver

SANJAY GANDHI went on a whirlwind pre-election tour of Punjab. On April 10 at Gurdaspur, accompanied by Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder, the local MP (wife of police commissioner Bhinder) and other top leaders of the Pradesh Party unit, he told newsmen that he had dropped the family planning programme. "The people do not want it as yet and so we will not promote it" he said. What will be the task of the Youth Congress (I) boys? According to Sanjay Gandhi, who at present is not even a member of the

national council of the organisation the YC boys will concentrate on organising eye camps all over the country, continue the campaign against dowry and plant trees. Talking of the qualities desirable in a prospective Chief Minister, Sanjay Gandhi said, "he should be acceptable to all sections in the Party, he should be able to carry all Party legislators with him". How many of the aspirants to Chief Ministership would qualify by these standards?

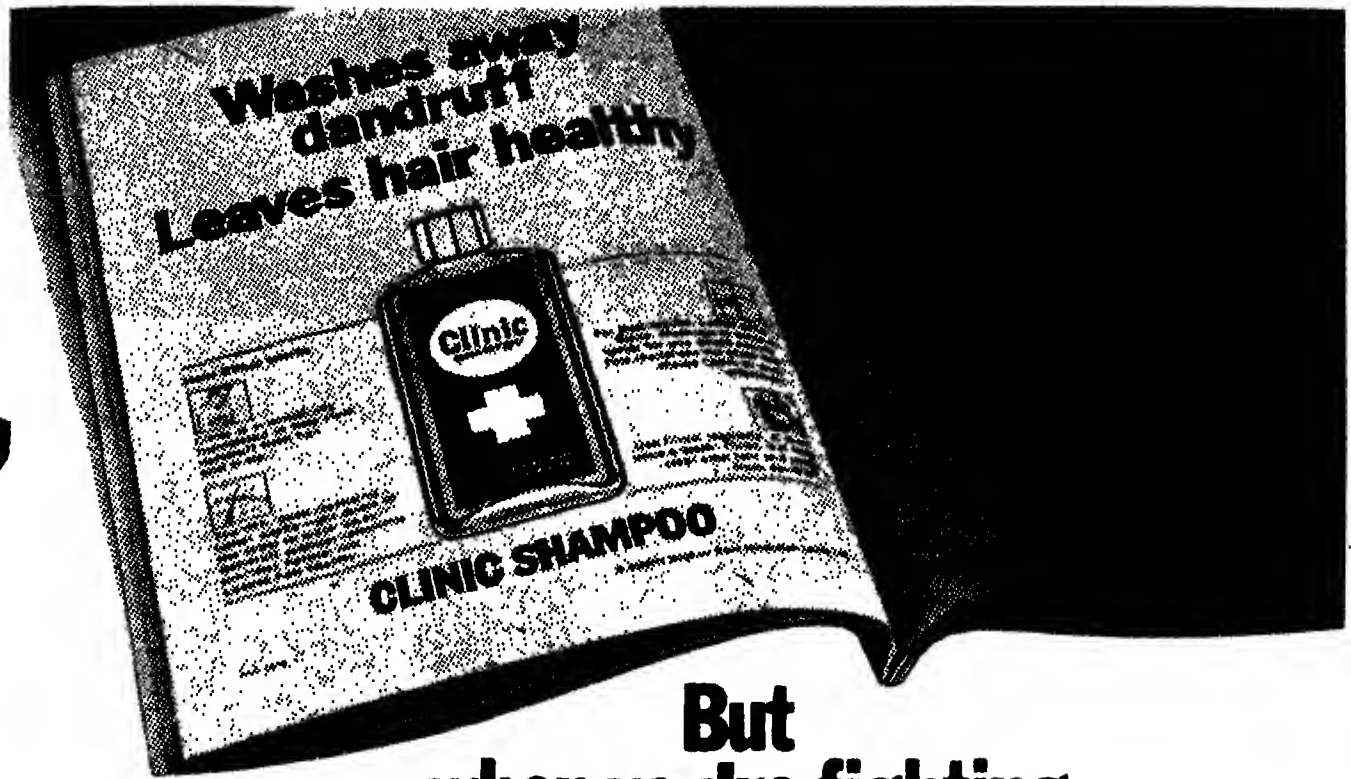
OM MAKWANA

CNS



DO you remember Mr Om Mehta who took all the important decisions in the Home Ministry before and during the Emergency? Mr Brahmananda Reddy, the then Home Minister, had very little power while his State Minister, Mr Mehta was all powerful. History is repeating itself in the Home Ministry. After Mr Zail Singh, the next seniormost in the Home Ministry should be Mr Venkatasubblah, the senior State Minister. He is a veteran parliamentarian. But AIR does not think so. All India Radio gives top priority and publicity to Mr Yogendra Makwana, the other State Minister, who is shaping up well to become another Om Mehta. Mr Makwana is the all powerful man of the Home Ministry and if things go according to pattern, Mr Venkatasubblah is on his way out.

D E. NIZAMUDDIN



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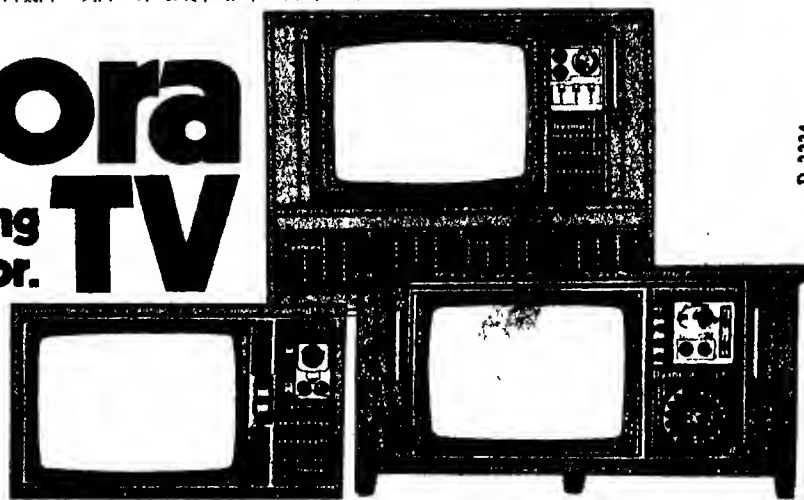
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Dyanora TV

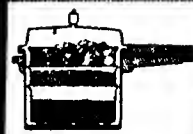
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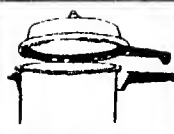


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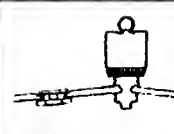
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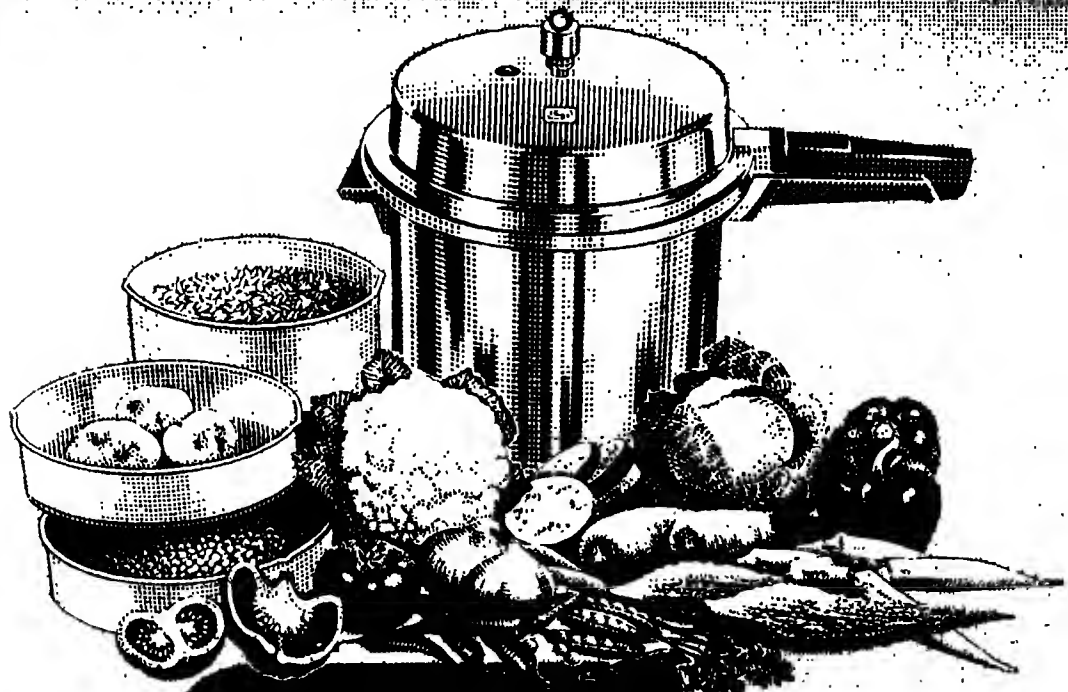


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Why did the former Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan come on a secret visit to India and meet Morarji Desai? Was he on a mysterious Mossad mission? If so, what role is the Israeli intelligence agency playing in international affairs?

With the talks between student leaders and the Centre on the issue of 'foreigners' having failed again, Assam entered a phase of widespread protests and disturbances. Although curfew was enforced and the state declared a "disturbed area", authority seemed to be non-existent; both the army and police seemed helpless in dealing with the picketers and demonstrators. Work in government offices came to a complete standstill. On-the-spot report on the developments.



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On April 7, three villages were brutally destroyed as a result of police violence in the subdivisional town of Islampur in West Dinajpur. Two people died, several were injured, and property worth an estimated Rs two million was damaged. Now, only charred huts remain along with the rubble and ashes while the people live on whatever they can salvage.

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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi,
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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COVER STORY

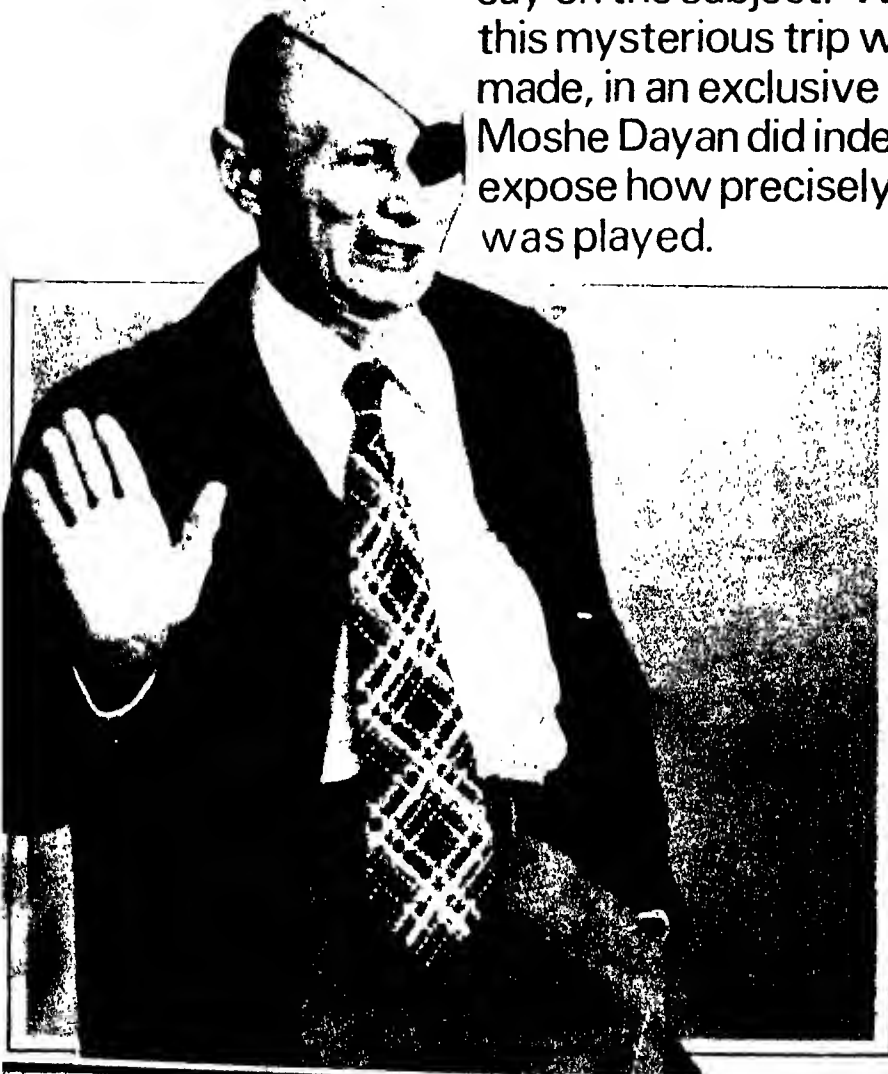
THE FULL STORY OF MOSHE DAYAN'S SECRET TRIP TO INDIA

By M. J. AKBAR

THE coming of the Janata Party to power in 1977 meant many things to many people. Israel saw it as an opportunity to fulfil a long-awaited dream : full recognition by India. This would be an important and dramatic diplomatic coup by Israel if it was ever achieved. India had been in the forefront, in various international bodies, of promoting the Arab, and particularly the Palestinian, cause. And India's voice, despite the efforts to muffle it, still carried weight at the United Nations, and more so in the non-aligned movement.

The appointment of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee as the Foreign Minister was seen by Israel as an encouraging sign. Not merely this, the Israelis also felt that Prime Minister Morarji Desai would be sympathetic to their cause. They were aware, as much as anyone else, that Morarji Desai was interested in shifting the Indian image

An Israeli newspaper first published the news that Moshe Dayan had visited India secretly during the Janata rule. This was denied in India by the ex-Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee; when former Prime Minister Morarji Desai was asked about Dayan's alleged visit, he refused to comment. The Israeli newspaper had nothing more to say on the subject. We publish details about this mysterious trip which Moshe Dayan made, in an exclusive story. We confirm that Moshe Dayan did indeed make the trip, and we expose how precisely the whole game was played.



away from the strong pro-Russian colour it had acquired after 1971. The fact that the former Jana Sangh formed such an important power group in the new framework also pleased the Israelis. The Jana Sangh's active championship of Israel against the Arabs had been music to Israeli ears all through these years when Israel has been an outcast in India.

Though we do not have full diplomatic relations with Israel, Israel has been allowed by the Government of India to maintain a presence in our country, mainly to facilitate the transfer of such Jews as may want to migrate to Israel. The Israelis maintain a consulate in Bombay. The Israeli consul general began active lobbying to obtain full recognition for his country, and in this he was helped a great deal by the Americans, who, quite expectedly, showed special interest in this Israeli effort. Anything which took India away from the non-aligned bloc, and brought the nation closer to the American sphere of influence, naturally would find favour with Washington.

The Israeli consul general actually met both Morarji Desai and

Foreign Minister Vajpayee to persuade them to give Israel full recognition. But both told him that this was not possible, for both practical and policy reasons. To begin with, the Government of India could not change its Arab policy overnight. And the risk of alienating the oil-producing Arab nations was simply not yet worth taking. But the Israeli consul general did not give up. He then played a high card. He sent word that General Moshe Dayan, then Israel's Foreign Minister, would like to pay a visit to India.

The initial reaction of both Prime Minister Desai and Foreign Minister Vajpayee was negative. They said this was impossible. But the Israelis went on making this request, through their friends and directly. At last, Morarji Desai and Atal Behari Vajpayee gave in. The formula worked out was this: Moshe Dayan would come as a private citizen, using a different name, and he should be disguised well enough to avoid being recognised. The Israeli consulate in Bombay and two top Indian security officials made all the arrangements for Moshe Dayan's secret and dramatic trip to India.

AND so Moshe Dayan came to India. He arrived by a regular carrier, with a false passport. He was wearing some make-up and he had taken off his famous and identifiable eye-patch; instead, to hide his blind eye, he was wearing dark glasses. He was accompanied by two Israeli security personnel. They landed in Bombay and were put up in a hotel. An air force plane came from Delhi to pick them up; the air force people had no idea who their distinguished looking passengers going to Delhi were.

They stayed for four days in Delhi at a private residence. Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Foreign Minister Vajpayee both went to see him, but separately. They went without fuss, as if they were dropping in to visit the person at whose house Dayan was staying. Desai went twice to see Dayan; Vajpayee also went twice. Other than Desai, Vajpayee and the two Indians from security, no other Indian was aware of Dayan's secret visit. Normal security personnel had, of course, been posted around the house in which Moshe Dayan was staying, but they had no idea whom they were guarding. Not even Vajpayee's deputy, Samarendra Kundu, who was the Minister of State for External Affairs, nor the Foreign Secretary Jagat Mehta were aware of the visit.

Both Desai and Vajpayee made India's position vis a vis Israel clear. They said that their Government had some sympathy for Israel's position, but it had greater sympathy for the Palestinians and



Moshe Dayan on the west bank of the Suez Canal, with Major General Ariel Sharon who has his head bandaged.

the Arabs. They told Dayan that durable peace in West Asia could only come about if a peaceful and amicable settlement of the Palestinian question could be reached between the Arabs and the Israelis. They assured Dayan that India would try and impress upon the nations of West Asia that if Israel agreed to settle the Palestinian question through talks, they should give up their slogans of war and allow Israel to coexist peacefully. India would welcome any effort at a peaceful settlement of the complicated problem. Desai and Vajpayee disappointed Dayan by saying that India could not allow an Israeli embassy to start functioning in Delhi at the moment.

General Moshe Dayan did not use all his time in Delhi only in discussions. He went out sight-seeing and shopping too. He shopped in Connaught Place, and saw some of the historic landmarks of old and new Delhi. He even took a trip to some villages in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. And then, after four days in Delhi under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai and the Foreign Ministership of Atal Behari Vajpayee, General Moshe Dayan went away, as quietly as he came. Leaving behind another chapter in the kind of secret diplomacy which Henry Kissinger made so famous. And leaving behind many questions in the minds of India's traditional friends.

ASSAM DEFIES THE ARMY

By SUBIR ROY

WHEN at 3.30 p.m. on April 18, the Gauhati High Court partially lifted its earlier stay order on the Assam Government notification declaring the state a disturbed area, a new and more dramatic phase of the nine-month-old movement in the state against "foreign nationals" began. Almost immediately at the state's administrative headquarters in Dispur near Gauhati, the Governor, the chief secretary and army and police officials went into a huddle which lasted several hours. What they were putting the finishing touches to would become known the next day, but what they were hoping for was a conciliatory move on the part of the Gana San-

gram Parishad which was leading the agitation. The Parishad leaders were simultaneously meeting in Gauhati to determine its future course of action after Mrs Gandhi's futile visit to Assam on April 12 in search of a solution. The news from the meeting was bad: No, the oil blockade would not be lifted. Instead, a new phase of the agitation would begin on April 22. The die was cast.

At midnight, April 18-19, the Governor, Mr L. P. Singh, issued the Assam Preventive Detention Ordinance under which 48 leaders of the Movement were immediately arrested, prominent among them being Mr Bhagu Phukan, General Secretary of the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU), Mr Nibaran Bora of the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad and Mr Atul Bora, Convenor of the Gana Sangram Parishad. An equally prominent leader who evaded arrest and went underground was Mr Pratulla Mahanta, President of AASU.



New Prasad Sinha

"We will give our blood, not our oil"—these were the words on a Chandmari street that a student, Dulal, had written with his blood; he had slashed his chest with a blade.

Even as the arrests were proceeding from door to door, another crucial drama unfolded at the pipeline headquarters of Oil India Limited in Narengi near Gauhati. Narengi had become a symbol of Assam's protest. Round-the-clock pickets from December 27 last year had stopped the flow of crude from Narengi to the Barauni refinery. The 2,000-odd picketers who had almost completed that night's vigil there suddenly found that the crunch had finally come. The Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup arrived with a formidable force and asked them to disperse. They saw that this time the Government meant business and the fact that most of the picketers that night were from outlying villages clinched the issue for the Sangram Parishad volunteers. The picketers gave themselves up. Narengi was "cleared" and the army posted at the township.

The first indication that residents of Gauhati got of the impending curfew was when at around 4 a.m. vehicles with loudspeakers went round parts of the city announcing the imposition of an indefinite curfew in the city from 5 a.m. It was not as if everyone was in the dark. The people taking part in the movement knew all about it and so did junior magistrates who were preparing themselves for all manner of curfew duty. Even the more knowledgeable shopkeepers told some of their important patrons the previous evening: "Buy up today, tomorrow we will be closed." As the day broke on the city, cooled and washed by overnight monsoon rain, some areas witnessed a flag-march by the army. As for the police posses posted at important intersections, there was not much evidence of patrolling or Shops were closed in most areas, except Silpukhuri, Chandmari and Ujanbazar. The police would ask a shopkeeper to pull down his shutters and immediately after they left the boys would ask them to pull them up. People began to come out of their houses and form little clusters. Those first few trickles would finally become a torrent.

The nine o'clock news over AIR announced that the blockade at Narengi was over. So symbolic and emotive had the blockade become that soon the mood began to grow sullen. People could be heard saying: "If the curfew could be broken (earlier in December) in Nowgong and Nalbari then why can't we do same here?" In less than an hour a veritable groundswell had developed. The cry was, "Let us go to Narengi"—which was where all roads led to, eventually. The processions started in little groups and, on approaching their destination, became massive. Everyone was being exhorted to come out of his house.

By 11.30 a.m. two lakh people had poured into the Bamuni Maidan area and were proceeding towards the industrial estate. In the industrial estate there was a police picket of about 30, midway between the two gates. Processions poured in through both and soon the logistics of the situation became clear. The police

picket was besieged. And what was more significant was that with the police were the DC, Additional DC and SP of Kamrup. Only the personal car of the Additional District Commissioner was in sight, not even a wireless van. Thirty scared policemen and the top brass of the city administration were surrounded by a sea of humanity. It would have been impossible to rescue them. Slogans rent the air and soon a verbal battle began between the Sangram Parishad leaders deputed to control the crowds and the officers. They demanded the lifting of the curfew and the withdrawal of the "black" ordinance. "Arrest all of us", the leaders said, pointing to the masses. The DC, Mr. Kamaleswar Bora, a benign, balding, middle-aged man, was at his wit's end. Withdrawing the Preventive Detention Ordinance was beyond his powers. But he would lift the curfew if the people behaved in a disciplined manner and did not try to break the cordon and go on to Narengi. At 12.30 p.m. with the aid of a public address system, the DC told the crowds around him that the curfew had been lifted. The movement leaders present with the DC went along to his office where the formal order lifting the curfew was passed.

The news was greeted with resounding cheers in the streets. Gana Sangram Parishad volunteers commandeered an auto-rickshaw and went around announcing over a loudspeaker that the curfew had been lifted and, more important, no crude was flowing out of Narengi. Shops slowly reopened. As evening descended, groups at street corners discussed the day's happenings exactly as they do after a soccer match. Even after clearing the pumping station at Narengi, crude could not be sent out because right up the line to the well-head Oil India employees refused to work. A combination of incredible administrative ineptitude, a spontaneous resentment and the ability to keep the movement peaceful gave the indigenous Assamese a victory and boosted their morale. The administration's nose was bloodied and someone would have to pay a price.

That very night the Sangram Parishad announced a fresh agitation from April 22 which was wider in its scope than previous phases. After oil it was now the turn of bamboos, jute, timber and plywood. These would not be allowed to leave Assam. Other than the routine picketing of state and Central Government offices, there would be a "cycle march" in the villages on April 29 to popularise the movement. A "martial sound" would be given on April 30 by rickshaws, cars and anything that came in handy. May 1st would be "peace and harmony" day when everyone would wear white badges and hoist white flags. A call was also given to surrender all government awards by the recipients in Assam. A beginning has already been made in this with the return of a *tamrapatra*.

After the previous day's victory, April 20, Sunday saw Gauhati city in a relaxed mood. The mood in the

state secretariat, Janata Bhavan's control room was different. There was intense preparation which found expression in a massive police mobilisation at the Chandmari crossing on the way to Narengi. The day's agitation programme set the pace for the next few days' activity. From around 10 am groups would begin to emerge from neighbourhoods and slowly coalesce into a procession as the Chandmari crossing approached. At the crossing the procession would be stopped by a strong police cordon. There the people would squat on the road about 200 yards from the cordon and shout slogans intermittently. A good kilometre before the crossing, the road would be lined every few yards by little tables with jugs of water and plastic glasses for the thirsty. Crowds would gather on the roads. The atmosphere would vary between one of festivity and confusion, with an undercurrent of tension.

On Sunday about 30,000 joined the procession. At around 2.30 pm people in small groups went right up to the police cordon and squatted before it. Since this constituted a violation of section 144 Cr PC, which was in force, they courted arrest. The voluntary arrests were conducted in a manner characteristic of the agitation: Walk in through a notional barrier, put your name down to record your arrest and walk out the other way. It was all very peaceful, and organised.

But the peace and the calm was not in evidence the next day, April 21. For some reason people that day refused to end the squatting or court arrest. The tension grew. People, mostly young men and women, sat on the road and shouted slogans, refusing to budge. The Deputy Commissioner pleaded with them for over an hour, but to no effect. The battle lines were clearly drawn. There were three cordons of policemen at distances of a few yards from each other. Most of them were CRP and junior Assam Police officials. Between the second and the last cordons a big thick coil of barbed wire lay stretched out. The helmeted policemen, with cane shields, lathis and leg guards were backed up by teargas squads.

First came the arrest of those sitting right in front, mostly women, but many more remained in the first few rows. Those arrested were put in buses which were parked behind the police cordons. From the bus windows the agitators flayed arms and shouted slogans, creating the false impression that the police had their tormenters right behind them. A harassed DC went up and down the cordons trying to argue but was met with a volley of slogans and abuses. A young man who had been arrested while talking to two of us and had managed to sneak behind the police lines, literally broke down with emotion and cried. His friends took him away.

The police finally went on the offensive at 2.45 pm. First there were the teargas shells. People had come well prepared with gunny-bags and drums of water. They tried to grab

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Mrs Gandhi at a meeting with officials and leaders at Gauhati

the flying shells with their gunny-bags and throw them in the water. In a scene reminiscent of the disturbances on Calcutta's College Street in 1966-67, some students threw a couple of shells back at the police, breaking the ranks of one of the cordons. The policemen ran to the streetside houses for water to splash on their eyes. The lathi charge was quite severe. People stumbled over each other and ran for cover. Some tripped and fell.

Those who got the worst of the blows were women. Stones were pelted back at the police. Some ran into the wayside AIR compound with the police hot on their heels. Later a home guard at the AIR gate said that the lathis fell on him also. In minutes the area was turned into a battlefield with the police making forays into side streets from which small groups tried to creep up behind them. It was almost over in 15 minutes. Chappals and crumpled dures on which people had squatted lay in the dust on the road. A thorny bush by the roadside had acquired the look of an unique collage. Little bits of women's shawls of different weave and design, had stuck to it. Then came the wail of ambulances to carry the wounded away. Two boys who were badly injured and unable to get up from the road were carried back to a police jeep and administered first aid by policemen. A sub-inspector of the Assam Police showed me a hand bruised by a brickbat and said: "We took the lead in chasing the boys to save them from the CRP lathis and they abused us". The day's tally was 150 injured, 27 hospitalised, and three seriously injured. Many of the injured were women. No police official could say how many teargas shells were fired.

As we made a detour and emerged on the other side we saw a remarkable phalanx of lawyers in immaculate black and white, proceed stiffly in a row to join the demonstration. We came back at 8.30 pm to find people walking up in single file. "courting arrest", turning back and some rejoining the queue in an endless roundabout. A weary additional DC whom I had seen there in the afternoon, kept mumbling, "Let's stop it here", as government officials took down names of those arrested by candlelight at a table in the middle of the road.

April 22 was the first day of the renewed agitation with picketing before Government and public sector offices. The monsoon was in full swing. At the Chandmari crossing people squatted peacefully on both sides of the road. And in the afternoon they quietly courted arrest. The Government headquarters at Dishpur were deserted and in the rain they wore a sepulchral look. At 10.30 the office of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) had a lock hanging from it. Only the top brass had arrived. There were no pickets before these offices. A dry wit said there was no need for the picketing here, "for it was going on right in the homes": The women wouldn't let the men go to work.

In fact, a notable feature of the Assam agitation has been the active role women are playing in it. The percentage of women in demonstrations ranges between 60 and 30. Middle-aged householders in private conversation appear perplexed while they agree with the basic aims of the movement. They are nevertheless mystified by the zeal with which their womenfolk have plunged into a public agitation as never before. Various

explanations are offered. In any peaceful agitation a large number of women reduces the chances of violence on either side. Another theory is that in a very strongly male-dominated society, women have seized a chance to come into their own and work shoulder to shoulder with men.

While the public agitation has been peaceful after the Naibarl riots, there is always an undercurrent of tension. A state Congress (I) leader and MLA, Mr Hiteswar Saikia, was allegedly the target of a grenade attack in which a man died. One version says that the grenade exploded in his hand, another that he died of a bullet wound. The car in which he was travelling to his hometown Nazira, in Sibsagar district has been seized for forensic examination. In another incident a CPI (M) MLA was attacked with lathis in Goalpara district. He had been organising resistance to the movement. Minority leaders have a bounded look about them. The threatening phone calls keep coming, they say.

The hardening of stands on both sides and the intensification of the agitation has its real genesis in the unsuccessful meeting Mrs Gandhi had with the Gana Sangram Parishad and AASU leaders in Gauhati on April 12. Her meeting with them was very short and lasted not more than 20 minutes. Not much of negotiation could have gone on, anyway. At the Press conference in Gauhati she gave the impression of being very firm on 1971. In a subsequent clarification she said that she did not discuss any cut-off year. A possible fall-out of the fiasco of April 19 may be the quick arrival of Mr H. C. Sarin as the principal adviser to the Governor. Will he repeat in Assam what he achieved in Telengana? ■

Battle of Bristol

There could be repercussions elsewhere, reports TARAPADA BASU from London

THE battle of Bristol was fought on April 2, three weeks before the first anniversary of Blair Peach's death, allegedly caused by police brutality at Southall during an anti-racial demonstration on April 23 last year. The flare-up occurred after a police raid on the Black and White cafe located on Bristol's Grosvenor Road at 3.20 pm. The violent reaction of youngsters, mostly born in Britain of West Indian or mixed parentage, to the raiding policemen ignited the battle and within minutes the situation was out of control. The police abandoned the scene at 7 pm. An orgy of rioting and looting in the area followed: 19 policemen and policewomen were injured, police patrol cars were overturned and burned and buildings including a bank set on fire. It was not until 11 p.m. the first policeman entered the area and reinforcements could reach only at about midnight. Twenty-one people, including whites, were arrested and accused of looting. Home Secretary William Whitelaw immediately demanded a report from the police chief. In his emergency statement in the House of Commons on April 3 before MPs left for the Easter break, he said "all the evidence suggests that this was not in any sense a race-riot."

In the orgy of violence, a mob of about 200 pelted policemen with stones, bricks and bottles. Then the looters moved in. Twenty-one people were arrested for offences involving stolen property and public disorder. Losses are estimated at more than one million pounds. Eyewitness reports confirmed what the chief constable or chief of Bristol Police, Brian Weigh, has said: the majority of those arrested were whites. These reports also confirmed that police provocation was apparent. At the cafe 14 policemen entered to question only four persons. Soon after, hundreds of blacks gathered outside the cafe. By then the police force had swelled to 80 men with police dogs and another 400 policemen were on standby call. The proprietor of the cafe had not been charged with any offence and had been remanded on bail. Yet the police force went in to deal with alleged offences under the Drugs Act and Licensing Act, according to police chief Weigh. He added: "We do these operations from time to time. They are routine. There were not too many policemen in the raid but local people objected to the presence of police there."

Rightwing Conservative MPs in-



William Whitelaw, Home Secretary

cluding members of the Home Affairs committee have urged the Home Secretary to sack Weigh as they believe he was "seriously at fault in allowing the creation in effect of a temporary 'no-go area' at the height of the disturbances". Polls conducted for a television programme revealed on April 10 that a deep distrust of the police exists among the people in some parts of the country, particularly south London. Hostility towards the police was clearly reflected from replies to questions put to 220 people of West Indian origin in Brixton of Greater London after the Bristol episode. In its coverage picture captioned "Bristol—latest" London's satirical weekly *Private Eye* dated April 11 published a picture of a line of policemen with one of them purportedly saying "Eeny Meeny," the second, "Mino Mo", the third "Catch a nigger by his toe" and the fourth "If he hollers, run like hell!" Labour MP Arthur Palmer who went to Bristol to see the extent of damage in the area within his constituency said, "I have always been aware of the tension under the surface in this area. This was a confrontation between black youths and the authority rather than a fight between black and whites. I think the police are in a cleft stick. They may be criticised for raiding this cafe but if they had ignored it, they would have come under attack from the white popula-

tion. Much of the rundown character of the area is due to the policies of local authorities. Council flats house a large number of black families who find themselves next door to other black families who pay less for their accommodation in the old terraces."

BUT the area has no race problems. The violence on April 2 was directed against the police," said one old resident of the area who has been here since the Thirties. Reverend Keith Kinler, an Anglican priest in the area said: "It was clear the needs of a significant minority in the community had been too long neglected". He added "there is acute unemployment and poverty. People here feel the pressure of frustration, despair, anger and hassles". Mr Weigh defended his decision to pull his men out for four hours because: "The situation could have caused serious injury to police and innocent bystanders after it became so ugly and violent". He further added: "If the local people think we let them down, well, I understand their feelings. But we had to take this decision in the best interests of everyone."

In the absence of the police the area was virtually turned into "no-go area" and the looters from within the area and outside did their devastating jobs thoroughly for four hours. But the police claimed that it was not made into "a no-go area" as a policy. Racial Equality Commission chairman David Lane who visited the area said: "We are extremely sad this has happened. An inquiry might be helpful. I want to get more action. There has been too much apathy on the part of the nation. What happened in Bristol could happen elsewhere in the country".

In London, police, social workers, and community relations specialists believe that widespread disorder could occur. Person or persons responsible for the death of Blair Peach in Southall have not yet been brought to book though the incident occurred over a year ago. A walk is being organised on April 27 to help the cause of anti-racism for which Blair Peach gave his life in Southall. The report of the unofficial committee of enquiry established by the National Council for Civil Liberties to investigate Peach's death on April 23, 1979 was published on April 22.

A community liaison police officer said: "We are keeping our fingers crossed that the Bristol riots won't be repeated in London. We know from past experience that one incident can trigger off fairly major trouble". Since April 5, there is reported to be a growing rift between the Conservative Government and some leading members of the Asian and black communities over the Home Secretary's decision to drop five

members of the Commission for Racial Equality. Four of them are coloured and the fifth is Miss Gwen Rickus, who has not been as critical of the Government's immigration policies as her four nonwhite colleagues. Some of the immigrant leaders have openly declared, "We have decided no other Asian or black will sit on the Commission. Anyone who does so will be treated like a leper in our community".

But there are others who are hoping to be nominated by the Home Secretary. Commission's chairman David Lane thought some of the reactions of the immigrant leaders were premature and overplayed. He hoped that Home Secretary Whitelaw would appoint "an equivalent number of black and Asian commissioners who will be just as committed to the cause of racial justice as my five retiring colleagues to whose work I wish to pay tribute." Mr Lane, a former Conservative MP from Cambridge who was appointed chairman of the Commission by a past Labour Government has been as critical of Conservative policies on some issues as his dropped colleagues have been. Those dropped did not ask for their 'retirement'. Mr Lane is therefore having difficulties in explaining the action of the Home Secretary and to justify his own position as he was appointed before them.

On April 8 Pakistan-born barrister Kadri accused a High Court judge of racial bias and asked him to step down as chairman of a tribunal hearing charges against another coloured barrister. But after conferring in private with other tribunal members, Mr Justice Parker said he would continue and denied that he was racially prejudiced. The disciplinary tribunal was held by the senate of the Inns of court and the bar against 42-year-old Mr Rahasya Rudra Narayan who practises in Birmingham. He denied four charges of conduct unbecoming of a barrister and two of professional misconduct. Guyana-born Narayan had insisted on a public hearing and this is believed to be the first open trial of a barrister in 200 years. The hearing was frequently interrupted by about 100 demonstrators in the Grays Inn quadrangle who shouted "We object to Parker" and "Racist Parker out, out". Mr Kadri who is Narayan's counsel, said the charges arose out of a letter he wrote to the president of the Birmingham Law Society. This alleged that black prisoners were being denied their right to select barristers of their choice and that the attitude of some Birmingham solicitors sprang from "a racist philosophy."

The Easter holidays — from Friday April 4 to Monday April 7—ended with scores of arrests at seaside resorts and football matches. All police leave was cancelled and reinforcements were brought from nearby areas to seaside areas. Those who created disturbances and smashed shop windows and public property were described by the police as "traditional holiday mob" mostly from London. In one seaside resort alone,



Margaret Thatcher with Y. B. Chavan

damage to shop windows and other properties totalled thousands of pounds and fines of about ten thousand pounds were imposed by a special court set up to deal with those arrested. Shopkeepers blamed the gangs who blamed the police who blamed the Civil Rights supporters. All these, however, did not get even a remotely racial interpretation, but Bristol stood out as an example of racial confrontation even though the Home Secretary and others maintained that it was not really "race riots."

Some Conservatives and Labourites may argue that a section of West Indian youth — estranged from their families—rejected approaches by the police in Bristol where it had been authoritatively claimed that good relations existed between the blacks

and the police because these youths have "subculture with a substantial criminal fringe". So the police were not dealing with the black immigrants but "the irreconcilable worst group of those immigrants".

But the racist fringe of the British people and the police—several of them returned from Britain's former colonies—do not treat the coloured humanly or as equal to the white. But all these elements are a fair minority in contrast with the large majority of law-abiding fair-minded and liberal Britons. This contrasting picture of race relations in Britain is before the authorities, but those in vantage positions who hold differing attitudes should change notes and get together if they do not want to see a repetition of the battle of Bristol elsewhere.

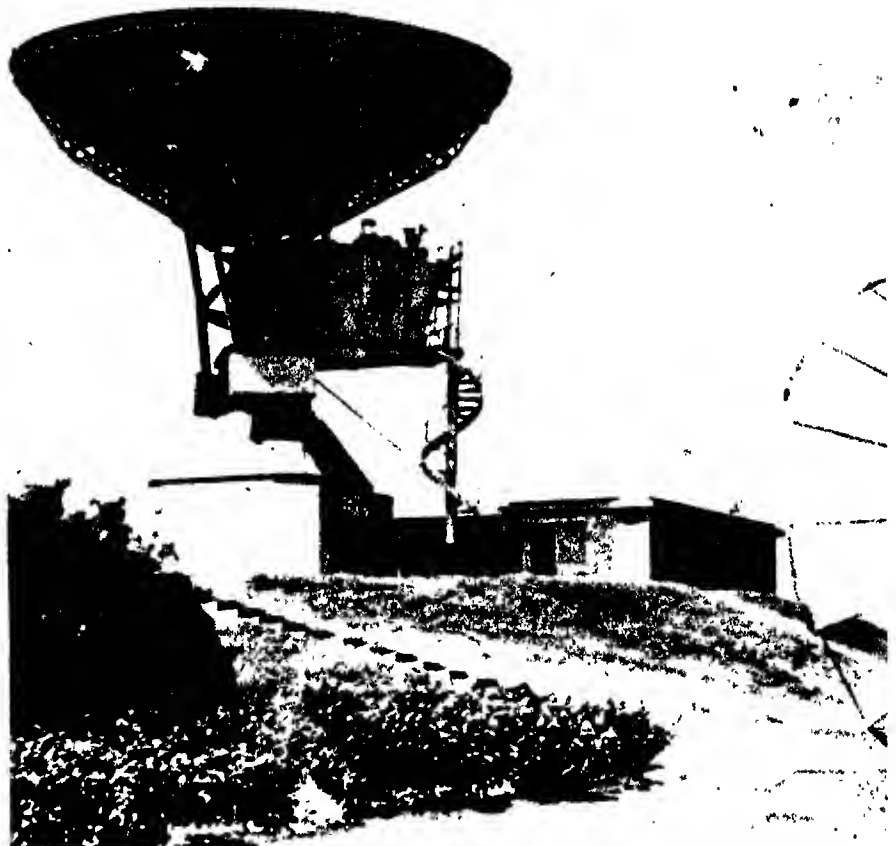
A colourless scheme

SAUMITRA BANERJEE reports from Delhi on the colour TV controversy

FOUR years ago, V. C. Shukla's proposal for the introduction of colour TV was turned down by Mrs Gandhi's Government. But the controversy started anew when in the beginning of March, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr Vasant Sathe, declared while releasing a colour TV set developed by Weston; that: "Colour television is no luxury". Though people in the electronics industry argue in favour of the introduction of colour TV, its role in the overall development of the electronics industry, as it exists in India today, has to be assessed.

According to the recommendations of a Planning Commission sub group, "As a further advancement of television technology, colour television has been playing a prominent part in recent years. As is well known, adding colour has a great impact; it reproduces nature as it exists. Psychologically, when colour is added to a visual scene, it adds a new dimension to perception. This has been recognised in almost all countries of the world where television has already established itself in a big way. Even in developing countries where television is being introduced, the emphasis is going straight on colour television. This technological marvel has to be taken note of for gradual introduction of colour television in our national TV system.....Colour television is one significant segment of consumer electronics area which is experiencing exponential growth in the world market. Also in view of the prospect of obsolescence of black and white technology and the inherent impact of colour TV over black and white, the sub-committee recommends that at least an experimental programme on colour TV transmission and reception may be envisaged."

At present, the cheapest black and white television set which costs about Rs 2,500 has about Rs 200 worth of imported components. Roughly, one out of every three TV sets has imported picture tubes. Those who are arguing in favour of colour TV say that with the increase in the production of colour TV all over the world, the demand for black and white components has shrunk. Its production has gone down and its price up. Besides, most countries have stopped manufacturing black and white components. And since the demand for television in India is not much, it would become uneconomical for India to manufacture these components. Besides, some of the components we have to buy for the black and white television, like video tape



The TV antennae for Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), which introduced television to rural areas, for agricultural education. A Planning Commission sub-group said in a report: "...adding colour has a great impact; it reproduces nature as it exists..."

recorders (VTR), are colour compatible. Again, India has agreements with at least 25 countries for the exchange of TV programmes. But since India cannot offer any colour programmes in exchange. It has not been able to avail of this opportunity. Therefore the argument put forward is that India should advance technologically, and this could possibly be achieved with the introduction of colour TV. The export markets would widen—the market for black and white TV is virtually non-existent now with the proliferation of colour TV. And India could compete in the world market. Said S. T. Vachani, Managing Director of Weston Electronics, the manufacturers of Weston TV: "Television is basically a labour-oriented product. In India labour is very cheap. Nearly one-twentieth of a country like Japan."

"There is therefore a lot of potential for the manufacture and growth of colour TV in India. And if we turn

to colour TV, then we can go in for large-scale exports. Colour television can also serve educational purposes more competently than black and white. It is more appealing and therefore more retentive, and for science and medicine it is much more helpful when you can see the colour of the chemical."

But this is only one side of the picture. It is essential to assess the costs involved in the production of a colour TV set. A colour TV set when produced would cost about Rs 10,000 and initially at least, all specific colour components would have to be imported. Even when colour components are manufactured in India, it is estimated that a colour TV set would cost no less than Rs. 7,000. Again, in India a black and white TV set costs thrice as much as a television set sold in other south-east Asian countries.

The chances, therefore, of selling colour TV sets at relatively low prices to capture the export market are

dim. Besides, a question which arises is : When other Indian electronic products like cassette recorders, radios and transistors cannot compete in the international market and there is a need to improve the quality of the products, what guarantee is there that colour television receivers would have an international market?

As far as the domestic market is concerned, no survey so far has been conducted on the number of people who would go in for colour television. The number, in any case, would not be substantial. In a country like India, where the vast majority of the people cannot afford a black and white television set, colour television would hardly have a widespread impact. This is more so in the rural areas where there is no electricity even to operate the set. Unless, of course, as Mr Vachani suggested: "If you don't have electricity, use batteries". This unfortunately is rather unlikely.

Besides, little can be done to reduce the cost of a colour television set. Even though the Information and Broadcasting Minister has said that "colour TV is no luxury" yet black and white television sets, radios, and cassette recorders are regarded as luxury items and fall under the luxury tax bracket. There is little justification and no reason why colour television should be exempted from this tax. Even Mrs Gandhi's Emergency Government recognised the exorbitant cost of a colour television set. In September, 1976, under V. C. Shukla, the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, a committee had been set up to explore the possibilities of introducing colour television in India. The committee had recommended experimental colour transmission of one-hour duration and advised that programmes like *Krishna Darshan* and educational and children's programmes be given priority. But one reason why the idea was shelved was the cost of the colour television set. It was then estimated that a colour television set would cost about Rs 15,000 and would therefore be beyond the buying capacity of most television viewers.

The initial investment will be huge. The studios for example consist of cameras, telecine equipment and VTR. The VTR has to be imported and 70 per cent of the rest is manufactured in India. With the introduction of colour TV more new equipment will have to be imported. The black and white camera, which costs about Rs seven lakhs would have to be replaced by the colour camera which would cost around Rs 10 lakhs. And the colour telecine equipment costs twice as much as the black and white equipment. To set up a black and white television studio it costs about Rs five crores, whereas to instal a new colour television studio it would cost an additional crore. Besides, new wardrobes and sets will have to be set up and the lighting facilities improved. The programme production cost would

move up from about Rs 8,000 per hour to about Rs 15,000. Maintenance too has to be taken into account. For example, in the Delhi station, the maintenance cost would move up from about Rs 1 crore a year to about Rs 2 crores. Besides, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) is producing most of the equipment necessary for the transmission of "black and white" programmes. With the introduction of colour TV, all colour equipment would have to be imported.

The amount invested in colour television could very well be invested in other spheres of the electronics industry. Telephone lines could be improved. The entire telephone system in India consists of outdated equipment. And improvement in this sphere is more important as it affects a larger section of society. The emphasis should be more on improving the state of existing electronics goods, rather than go in for colour television immediately. After all, is it not more necessary to have better black and white television sets before going in for colour television? In rural India, there are no facilities even for the repair of transistors and radios.

The electronics revolution, the most important technological breakthrough since world war II, has bypassed India. The output of India's electronics industry is only 44 per cent of the global output and a fraction of the output of Third World countries like Brazil, South Korea and Taiwan. The annual rate of growth of the value of output over the past ten years has been less than half the rate in the rest of the world. People in the industry feel that the blame for this should go to the Electronics Commission (EC) and the Department of Electronics (DOE). They say that the policies of these organisations have led to stagnation in the electronics industry. Especially, since they are based on the assumption that a high technology industry which has witnessed major technological breakthroughs every few years, can reach a competitive level in complete isolation from the rest of the world and within the domestic market. This, in the case of India is extremely limited. The structure of duties, the critics feel, imposed by the EC and the DOE, is irrational as the import of raw materials and components is discouraged while assemblies and finished goods encouraged since they are subject to lower rates of duty. This has led to a lack of incentives to develop indigenously and a consequent crippling of the industry.

However, the Sondhi Committee, which was set up to review the entire electronics policy and organisational set-up and recommend changes has prepared a report which envisages the scrapping of the EC as it considers the EC to be very restrictive. The committee has recommended lowering of duties, liberal and duty-free import of second-hand machines and simplification of import procedures. Save the report

"Unfortunately, the Indian scene in electronics, even after two decades, is marked by a slow rate of growth. Production in 1978-79 was an insignificant share of the global production. This is unfortunate as the most important of all resources in this field is possessed by this country; namely an abundance of skilled and employable manpower and a high degree of technological competence." On the licensing policy for the electronics industry it says: "A critical analysis of the present status of the electronics industry in the country shows that the investment, production and employment generation have not been as high as expected partly because of the elaborate structure for screening and rigid control on all matters connected with the licensing or expansion of new capabilities and approval of projects in this sector. In other sectors of the industry, the regime of industrial control has kept pace, at least to some extent, with changing needs and has been progressively relaxed. In electronics, on the other hand, the emphasis so far seems to have been more on regulatory rather than on developmental and promotional aspects. For example, the General Industrial Policy provisions regarding automatic growth diversification and liberalisation of investment procedures and maximum utilisation of installed capacity for units coming within the ambit of licensing do not seem to have applied to the electronics sector as vigorously as in other areas".

The Sondhi Committee report, however, neither identifies the basic strategy of electronics development in India nor the fields where the industry could maximise its advantages and make a thrust into the world market. And as one insider commented, "The Sondhi Committee report provides just the bare minimums. Even if the report is implemented, India will not be having advanced technology."

In view of this it is clear that the Government is not likely to take a hasty decision. As the Information and Broadcasting Minister recently said in Parliament while replying to a question on colour television, "No decision has yet been taken to introduce colour television nor has any project been prepared for this purpose. However, keeping in view the fact that colour TV technology has replaced black and white technology in most parts of the world, it is proposed to examine the potentialities, keeping in view the cost, manufacturing capabilities and the technical requirements of both transmission and reception".

But the question is : If we are to move towards new technological frontiers, would the introduction of colour television help substantially? What is important is not the introduction of colour television which in the Indian context would be an isolated phenomenon, but an overall, balanced growth of the electronics industry and a thorough review of the Government's policy on electronics. ■

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Happy trouble-shooting

SOME people may be aware that *The Sea Wolves*, which recently completed an 11-week shooting schedule in Delhi and Goa, is the first major international film to be shot almost entirely in India during the past decade and a half. The antipathy of the Indian government to foreign filmmakers since the overblown encounters with the ill-fated *Nine Hours to Rama* and Louis Malle's television series on India, is a matter of common knowledge.

What magical charisma, therefore, did the producers of *The Sea Wolves* need to successfully manoeuvre their way through the labyrinthine corridors of power to be allowed to set up so outrageously ambitious a project in India?

"None", says Euan Lloyd, the British producer of the film. "Absolutely none."

"Certainly", he adds, "some of your procedures are cumbersome, time-consuming and, to us, inexplicable. However, once we agreed to comply with all the rules—and there were many—we were allowed to bring in and take out all our equipment and personnel without any problem".

What exactly are the chronological procedures and logistics involved in making a foreign film in India with special reference to *The Sea Wolves*?

"The first step", says Harold Buck, associate producer of the film, "is to submit the script for approval to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting together with a proposed schedule of dates, durations, locations, broad requirements, etc." However, approval of the script is—as the Americans say—merely a ticket to the ball game. It doesn't necessarily guarantee a seat at the show. Minutely detailed lists, together with accurate valuations of every item of equipment the production company was likely to need through its 11-week schedule in India had to be submitted to the Finance Ministry many months in advance. No item, however small, would be allowed to pass through the fine toothcomb of the Customs authorities unless included in this preliminary list.

Furthermore, separate lists were required of 'Equipment' as opposed to 'Expendables' (i.e. stationery, light bulbs, camera tape, make-up, chalk, etc.) on which there is a punitive duty of 120 per cent. As a matter of incidental interest the eventual freight of the film sent to Delhi weighed in at ten and a half tons—of which two and a half kilograms accounted for the aforesaid list itself.

In order to escape paying an impossible amount of duty on equip-

By ASHA BHANJDEO

ment worth several hundred thousand dollars, the production company either had to secure an import licence—a process for which one lifetime has been known to be insufficient—or to obtain a mystical mantra known amongst the enlightened as a TBRE—Tourist Baggage for Re-Export certificate. Separate TBREs were required for each port of entry, in this case two, Bombay, Delhi. Goods brought in under a TBRE are exempt from import duty. All items brought into the country under a TBRE certificate must be entered on somebody's passport. The production company was therefore obliged to 'distribute' its massive consignment among the passports of a few of its unit members who were then in the somewhat odd position of being unable to leave the country—or, for that matter, their jobs—for any reason whatsoever before completion of the film, unless they took a large part of the equipment with them!

However, if script approval is a ticket to the ball game, a TBRE merely instructs the usher to direct you to your seat. The show is yet to begin. Customs officials at each port of entry now had to be persuaded that the precious TBREs obtained actually meant what the alphabetical permutations conveyed: a somewhat formidable task as most of us can feelingly testify. Once the Customs officials agreed to accept the TBREs—can this now be said to be the happy end of the line? "Not yet", says Harold Buck. "Actually, this is the point at which we really knelt down and prayed".

Lists of requirements had been prepared in faraway London many months back. Each department had been given strict instructions with regard to 'Equipment' and 'Expendables' which needed to be listed and

Roger Moore and Barbara Kellerman, in a scene



packed separately as per Indian regulations. If one single 'Expendable' happened to have found its way by mistake into a crate marked 'Equipment' there could, literally, be hell to pay. And there were over 1,000 crates to contend with! "However," says Harold Buck, "by the grace of somebody up there, there were no mistakes and our ten and a half tons of freight were cleared by Delhi Customs in the record and gratifying time of only two days."

Special rules necessarily apply to the import of raw stock which is neither equipment nor an expendable. The producers were allowed to import their requirement free of duty provided every foot of film imported—used, unused, discarded or wasted including end bits—was accounted for and eventually taken out of the country. The film's 'rushes' flown to London every day for processing, therefore, left in sealed boxes pasted down with more vital statistics than those of a double line of chorus girls. The same procedure had to be followed for rolls of film for still photographs.

And now, with cast, crew, equipment, expendables and raw stock safely in the country, the producers prepared to face the trickiest problem of them all: the import of large quantities of arms, ammunition, explosives, squibs, etc. (albeit, dummies) needed for the film's action sequences. Since the hardware came from both the USA and the UK, permission had to be obtained from the civil aviation authorities of both countries to carry the consignment on commercial airliners of the two countries. Sanctions were then needed from this country to bring the hardware into Indian airports and to offload it on to Indian soil. Once in Bombay, the cargo had to be placed in the custody of the local police and was taken away by them under heavy escort for storage under police guard. Similar procedures had to be followed in order to transport the arsenal to Goa where it remained in police custody until required for use under daily police supervision. Since guns are listed as 'Equipment' but ammunition and explosives come under 'Expendables' and as such charged with heavy duty, much of the firearm-fodder was purchased in India.

It certainly says a great deal, not only for the meticulous planning and persistence of the film unit but also for the genuine cooperation of the many authorities in India that in spite of the horrifying mileage of red tape and the marathon paper-chases involved, *The Sea Wolves* actually managed to start filming dead on schedule on November 23 last with David Niven and Trevor



An I & B Ministry official (extreme right) assigned to watch the filming at South Block, Delhi

Howard facing the camera on a crowded street in Delhi not far from Kashmere Gate.

After the two weeks in Delhi came another major headache — the massive logistical problem of packing and transporting ten and a half tons of valuable equipment and expendables, over 300 pieces of personal baggage and a cast and crew of over 100 half way across the country to Goa with minimum loss of time. The initial plan to transport all heavy equipment by road inside the trucks which housed it, was hastily abandoned when it was discovered that a straightforward journey of four or five days could take up to 30 due to the numerous — and often argumentative and expensive — check points and octroi posts along the road from Delhi to Goa. Furthermore, although transporting personnel by scheduled flights would certainly be cheaper, the time lost in an overnight stop in Bombay and in the temperamental uncertainties of Indian Airlines' schedules, were considered too hazardous in terms of possible delays.

Eventually, empty equipment trucks were despatched by road while the dismantled equipment itself was flown to Goa partly by scheduled Airbus and partly by chartered Viscount. The cast, crew, office personnel and personal baggage flew to Goa direct from Delhi by chartered Indian Airlines Boeing. The last shot went in the can in Delhi at 5 pm on Friday, December

7. The first shot in Goa was taken at 10 am on Tuesday, December 11, less than four days later — a remarkable feat of organisation, discipline and professionalism in an industry which operates on the maxim that time is, indeed, money.

The move from Delhi to Goa put the production company back by almost Rs. four lakhs. The 737 charter alone is said to have cost in the region of Rs 90,000 an hour of flying time.

The Sea Wolves had a total of 61 days of filming and was completed exactly on schedule, almost to the hour, on February 5 in Goa. "Part of the credit", says producer Euan Lloyd, "must go to the magnificent Goa sun. I have never filmed anywhere else in the world where there is guaranteed sunshine for so many consecutive days with no interference from the weather".

What special undertakings, if any, did the film company have to give the government before permission to film in India was granted? The answer is, none. Certain things are, of course, taken for granted. It was understood that the unit would patronise Air India as much as possible. Employment of Indian personnel and expenditure of a large amount of foreign exchange are also inevitable. The total amount of money brought into the country is estimated in the region of two million dollars. Certainly, the unit's daily expenditure ran into around Rs. two lakhs per day.

In fact, contrary to what most people believe, the conditions the Indian government imposes on all filmmakers of foreign origin, are not only minimal but also reasonable and easily fulfilled. Film producers have to sign a bond with the Reserve Bank as to the total value of the goods brought in. The bond is cancelled once the unit leaves the country. The I & B Ministry appoints one of its officials as the governmental 'watch-dog' on the set to ensure that the approved script is adhered to and that the film contains nothing that might be considered derogatory to the country. Finally, the completed film must be shown to an Indian diplomatic mission abroad.

Has it all been worth it—the red tape, the paperwork, the yearlong preparations, the delays, the uncertainties, the headaches and the hassles? "Most definitely", says Euan Lloyd. "India has proved easier to film in than many other countries. In fact, I hope that other foreign filmmakers will follow our example. Perhaps your procedures need to be simplified and the uncertainties need to be ironed out but if foreign film producers behave themselves and obey the laws of the land with strictness, I have no doubt they will receive the same warmth and co-operation that we did".

So, the next time you feel weighed down with the burdens of bureaucracy while waiting in a queue at a rationing office—don't complain. It could be much worse.

Soviets blundered in Afghanistan

By MADHU LIMAYE

THE situation in West Asia has been steadily deteriorating in the last two years. The process of detaching Sadat's Egypt from the Soviet orbit, which was initiated by the United States Secretary of State, Mr Henry Kissinger, was given a fresh impetus by President Carter. This led to the strengthening of the American position in the northern sector of West Asia. However, the bastion of US strategy—Shah's Iran—began to disintegrate even while fresh progress was made by the Americans in bringing about "rapprochement" between Egypt and Israel. The revolt of the Iranian people against the Shah regime assumed massive proportions in 1978 resulting finally in the overthrow of Shah's absolute monarchy. Iran has been in turmoil ever since. The foundation of the American strategic plan, based on the feverish arms build up in the Gulf region, collapsed overnight.

The Iranian revolution was fuelled by many ingredients, the dominant being the revival of Islamic

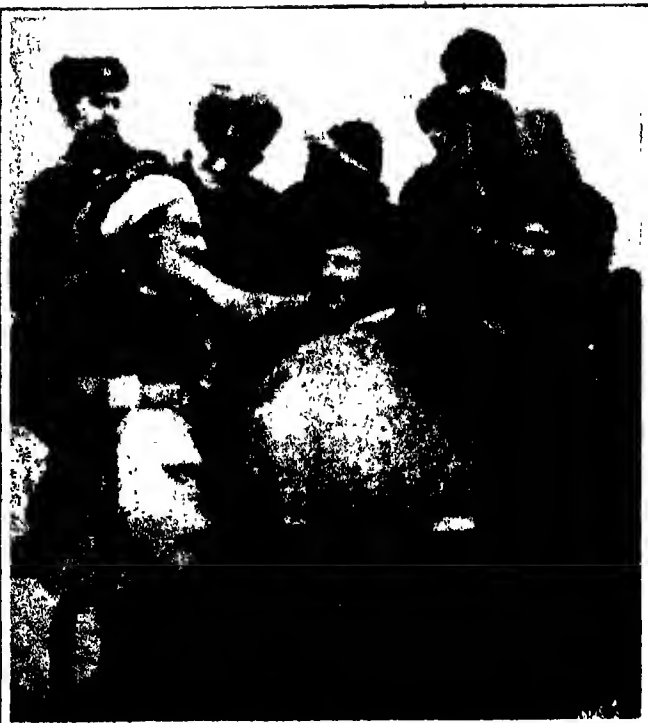
fundamentalism of the Shia sect. The liberal and Marxist elements were also important as far as the industrial working class, rural poor and middle class were concerned. While the struggle for supremacy within the badly fragmented Iranian polity continues it is difficult to say what the final outcome would be. But it is clear that this crisis has had repercussions not only in Iran but in the neighbouring states also. The various nationalities in Iran like the Kurds, Azarbaijanis, Turks, Arabs and Baluchis belong to the Sunni sect and the Shia fundamentalist upsurge has not reconciled these recalcitrant minority groups to the Tehran authorities. In the southern oil bearing Khuzistan region the Sunni Arabs are in a majority and their agitation had paralysed Iran's oil production for a long time. Neighbouring Iraq—in which are located the main pilgrim centres of the Shias—has an overall Sunni majority. However, among the Arab speaking people in that country, Shias constitute a majority. Iraq is obviously suffering from the spillover effects of shattering events in Iran.

Under the Shah, Iran not only maintained relations with Israel, the monarchist regime generally pursued an anti-Arab policy. The smaller Sheikhs feared annexation by Iran. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation has now won an important ally in the new Iran. To that extent the American gains in the northern sector have been offset by the turmoil in the Gulf region.

This turmoil has other side effects also. In the oil bearing states there is a vigorous drive against the immigrants and large scale expulsion of immigrants will have an adverse effect on the economies of the neighbouring states, including India and Pakistan. We are running a trade deficit, and decrease in remittances and further rise in crude oil prices will be a severe blow to our people.

Afghan rebels





Russian troops with Afghan

The Iranian crisis completely unsettled the Americans and they began to review their strategy in the Indian Ocean area. Several new proposals were made such as the creation of a credible Rapid Development Force and establishment of an independent Fifth Fleet on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Anyway, the American hostages crisis led to a massive naval build up by the United States with a counter build up by the Soviet Union. Instability and insurgency in Afghanistan have produced several Afghan regimes within a short space of time. Mr Daoud's republic regime was replaced by Mr Tarakki. Mr Tarakki was in turn overthrown by Mr Amin and, after the massive intervention by the Soviet troops, Mr Amin himself was liquidated and a new regime of Mr Babrak Karmal installed in his place. The social base of the successive Afghan governments has been progressively narrowing and the consequent uncertainty has aggravated.

While there is no need to overdraw the similarity between increasing American involvement in Vietnam in the Sixties with the deepening Soviet involvement in Afghanistan—after all Afghanistan has a common land frontier with the Soviet Union—it seems to me that the military intervention of the Soviet Union is a blunder of the first magnitude. However, one can easily perceive why the Soviets blundered into this situation. The events in Iran had caused deep anxiety in the Soviet ruling circles. They feared that their own Muslim republics would get infected by the religious revival in the Islamic world. The Soviet defence forces were afraid that Islamic fundamentalists as well as the American intelligence networks would not only create more trouble in Afghanistan but set up a hostile regime there.

While representatives of Pakistan have stoutly denied that the Afghan refugees in Pakistan are being trained by Pakistani authorities, the provocative speeches made by President Carter's National Adviser, Mr Brzezinski, in the presence of Pakistani authorities in the Afghan refugee camps show that the Americans are determined to use these refugees for mounting a guerilla warfare. While it is unthinkable that the Pakistani President would provoke a direct military clash with the Soviet Union, he is clever enough to see that the current Afghan crisis, while increasing tension and escalating military conflict in the area, has provided him with a golden opportunity to strengthen his own internal position. In the name of external danger he has already effectively silenced the opposition forces: the elections in Pakistan have been indefinitely postponed. The crisis has also opened up the

The last shot went in the air. The crisis has also opened up the Delhi at 5 pm on Friday, December lakhs per day.

possibility of Pakistan receiving massive military and economic aid from the United States and its allies without Pakistan's having to modify its nuclear weapons programme. The Pakistani President is bound to exploit his new opportunities to the fullest extent possible.

All this has adversely affected the security environment of India. We in India have to take our stand prima facie from the point of view of (a) preserving our national independence; (b) strengthening the integrity of the nation and (c) ensuring our national security. In the last 32 years the Americans have been pursuing a policy which has very little regard for the interests and susceptibilities of the Indian people. Whoever is the President and whichever Party he belongs to, there has been an amazing consistency in the American policy towards India.

WHILE trying to understand the possible Soviet motives in moving troops into Afghanistan and defending India's security interests we must take note of the following:

(a) that there has been a massive induction of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan; (b) that these troops have crossed the frontiers of an independent sovereign state; (c) that the argument about invitation is neither here nor there, the fact being that the Soviets were actuated by purely security considerations; (d) that unlike India's Bangladesh operations Soviet military intervention is not going to be of a short duration and that Soviet troops are likely to remain in Afghanistan for a very long time; (e) that Soviet intervention has provided a pretext for the Americans to step up their military and naval build up in the Gulf and Indian Ocean area; (f) that the American presence in the first instance had nothing to do with nor was it provoked by the Afghan crisis; it had been there for a long time and had been increased in response to the collapse of their military bastion in Iran; (g) that the American hostages crisis, the threat of a blockade of Iran, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the American response to this event have all revived the cold war and have increased the area of military conflict; (h) that the danger of an unstable Pakistan arming itself to the hilt constitutes a grave threat for India's security; (i) that the Americans are over-reacting deliberately because tough postures help President Carter secure re-election in the fall this year; and finally (j) that its West European allies, except Britain, are cool to the American efforts to overheat the situation.

It is against this background that India will have to formulate its policy. This policy, I think, should be based on hard-headed realism. There is no scope for emotional outbursts of any kind. To whip up an anti-Soviet hysteria would in no way advance India's security interests. To launch an emotional outburst against the United States will also not help much.

The second point I would like to make is that the approach to the Afghan developments, military build up in the Indian Ocean and the pouring of massive arms into Pakistan should not be made a political Party issue. India's internal economic problems are very grave. The political problems, especially in the north-east, are also very serious. There is enough ammunition for internal controversy in this. There is no need to extend this Party conflict to the field of national security. I would therefore like a national policy to be evolved in regard to the West Asian crisis. It is the duty of the Government to take the opposition into confidence. The opposition must also desist from the temptation of making Afghanistan an issue of Party strife; there is no mileage to be derived either for the Government or for the opposition.

The next point that I would like to make is that disapproving of the Soviet military build-up in Afghanistan and the American military build-up in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean area by themselves do not constitute a viable policy. The intensification of the cold war and the extension of the area of conflict will not increase India's security. On the contrary, the danger of Pakistan being sucked into the vortex of the conflict will increase our anxiety manifold and it will be impossible in that situation for India to stay out.

Priority must therefore be given to the reduction of tension in the area. A solution must be worked out whereby Soviets will be induced to pull out of Afghanistan.

tan without loss of face. A fundamentalist and reactionary regime in Afghanistan or may not constitute a grave threat to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is the largest country in the world. Its productive capacities are vast, and it has now achieved military parity with the United States. It can look after itself very well. But a chain of fundamentalist reactionary states from Saudi Arabia right to the borders of India would certainly constitute a serious threat to India. The massive American build-up in the Indian Ocean area, far from providing additional security to India, will actually complete its encirclement. I would like to warn that in future, because of this build-up, our Indian policy will become subject to extraordinary outside pressure. Our energy must therefore be directed towards defusing the crisis. The help of every country which is interested in de-escalation should be mobilised towards this supreme objective. The EEC, especially West Germany and France, Austria, Yugoslavia, the Scandinavian countries all can help in their own way. Even Japanese cooperation can be sought. The regional South Asian approach can also be dovetailed in this concerted effort. The extremist American reaction to the current crisis is the result of the cynical election strategy of the Carter forces. There is reason to believe that a softening will come after November. But the intervening period is a difficult one.

After making a number of contradictory statements it appears that the Indian Government's approach is gradually approximating to the policy which patriotic people have advocated in the last two months. It is obvious that the pro-American elements in the country will not approve this policy. They would like to foment anti-Soviet hysteria, completely disregarding the fact that India's defence effort and India's security today depend to a great extent on good Indo-Soviet relations. They will also totally disregard the fact that the Americans have done everything in their power during the last 32 years to undermine India's position in the Indian Ocean area. It is useless to remind them of the American stand on Kashmir, on Goa and on Bangladesh. It is futile to ask them to read the Nixon Memoirs and Kissinger's latest book. They are serving their own interests.

Among the other world powers only China seems to be bent on a policy of fanning the conflict. China hopes to profit by increased Soviet-American confrontation. They would also like to use Pakistani territory as a base for guerilla operations in Afghanistan. But all this will not promote our national interests. Whatever may be the current difficulties of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan it is well to remember that Pakistan is extremely vulnerable because the Soviets too can exploit separatist tendencies in Pakistan.

We must warn Pakistan about these dangers. We should assure them again and again that we have no designs against them. We should also persuade the Soviet Union to reassure them. But at the same time the President of Pakistan must give up his rearmament plans, prevent the "refugees" being used as insurgents and agree to a real non-aligned Afghanistan which is not hostile to the USSR. It is laughable to maintain that the Americans have a vital stake in the Gulf ten thousand miles away from their homeland but the Soviets have no vital interest in Afghanistan!

The question is whether the Americans will accept a non-aligned Afghan regime with which the Soviets can live. A neutral state on the model of Switzerland or Austria or Sweden presupposes a high level of economic development and internal stability. These conditions do not exist in Afghanistan. Besides this status cannot be imposed on it by outside powers. Other powers have no right to deny to the Afghans their right to freedom. Guarantee against outside aid to insurgency, withdrawal of Soviet troops and a non-aligned Afghanistan alone can provide a solution.

While India will have to maintain state-to-state relations with all the West Asian countries, it is clearly in India's interest to have non-fundamentalist progressive regimes in West Asia. We must therefore strengthen further our relations with Iraq, Syria and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Meanwhile we should expand our economy, bring about improvement in our infrastructural facilities and strengthen our defence forces.

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Islampur: Police go berserk

By TOOSHAR PANDIT



ON April 7, a cluster of hamlets scattered over a ten-square mile area on the north-eastern fringe of West Bengal was brutally destroyed, after twenty hours of police barbarism. What now remains of these villages — Balancha, Ringkua, Guabari, Phulbari, Borogochha, Gondolgochha — within five kilometres from the subdivisional town Islampur, in West Dinajpur, along a metal road, are the skeletons of charred huts, rubble and ashes. The inhabitants, victims of hate, live on charity, or scavenge the debris for

anything they can salvage. Armed para-military Border Security Force and the Eastern Frontier Rifles man the Islampur police station and warily prowl the village roads substituting for the regular policemen, now confined to their barracks by a Government order. Huge shards of clay pots, litters of dimpled tin cans, mounds of charred paddy, chunks of baked mud, gaping chasms in the walls, sullen faces, the glint of sunlight on broken pieces of glass, the twisted tangle of corrugated tin and bamboo poles, heaps of burnt hay, polythene tents, revive memories of



Bangladesh or a Mai Lal.

Only in the relative calm late in the week could a real count be taken of the devastation. The toll stood at two dead and several injured. Property worth an estimated Rs 2 million was damaged, with 600 huts completely gutted rendering some 3,000 farmers and potters, mostly the lower caste migrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan, and Muslims, homeless. Wholesale looting by the police has turned them paupers. The statistics present only a partial picture. For, the damage is more psychological than physical. Even after seven days fear kept many villagers away from their homes and village.

The bizarre story of vengeance and violence begins with the arrival of a posse of six policemen led by the officer-in-charge of the Islampur police station at Phulbari village in a jeep on Sunday April 6 around 7 p.m. ostensibly to answer a tip from the adjoining Rajgunge police station, about a possible dacoity in a *bandoowalla* (literally, a house with a gun) residence. As the jeep left the metal road and pitched on to the village track, the officer ordered its headlights to be dimmed and the engine muffled, and drove to the two-storied stucco residence of Sarat Pal, one of the two affluent villagers owning guns. From there, the OC and two other policemen backtracked for about 500 yards to the residence of Suren Modak, the only other person owning a gun and a pucca house.

Suren's second son Sankar, 21, was standing in front of the house when the police walked up, and asked him to fetch his father. "Tell him, barababu is here," one of them growled. When, Suren came out, the officer wanted to know if he had a licence for the gun. He had, then the officer asked, who might be near the gun then. "Possibly, my wife," Suren replied. "Then go and be with her and don't dare to come out," the officer cautioned. Suren went in. He recalls, "But even before we could serve some tea to the visitors, shots rang out from the direction of Pal's residence. It had to be the dacoits, we thought. I raced out to the porch. 'Why don't you do something?' I begged the policemen. But, they scarcely moved."

Nobody in the village really knew what was happening at Pal's residence but everybody suspected the same thing: the dacoits had come. They cannot be faulted for this. Three of the five police stations—Islampur, Goalpokhar and Chopra—in the Islampur subdivision are located close to Nepal, Bangladesh and Bihar borders, and offer an ideal sanctuary for smugglers. The local people are not only bitter about the mounting incidence of crime and violence in the area but are also firmly convinced that the police was actively nursing the criminals. The feeling that the police cannot or will not protect them has led the villagers to rely increasingly on their own strength and stimulate in them a tendency to take the law into their hands. Thus, the sound of the first



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shot dragged many villagers out on the road with whatever weapons they could pick up—kitchen knives, daggers, swords, meat choppers, lances, sticks, bamboo poles, iron bars. The crowd swelled as Suren, bottled up in his room by the police, fired a couple of blanks in reflex response.

BUT what was really happening at the Pal residence? Khiramani Pal, 23, wife of Sarat Pal's nephew Rajen, 31, says that soon after the jeep stopped in a vacant lot about thirty yards from the house, some policemen came and kicked the front door splicing it into splinters. One policeman grabbed Sarat Pal's wife to know if her husband was at home. No, she said. Another asked where the gun was. She bluffed them by saying that she was only a maid-servant. The ruse worked. She ran away.

Rajen remembers that the first thing he thought of was the gun locked up in a first floor room. "As I climbed the stairs, the policemen pulled down yet another tin door at the entrance of the main building. But, I picked up the gun before they reached the top of the staircase. A shot rang out pretty close. Then another. I moved to the rear balcony. From there I saw four people—three in uniform and one in plain dress—fan out in different rooms. Then, the sound of the boxes and the trunks being broken open. When I heard them talking about the gun, I climbed higher on to the roof and, clutching the gun firmly, dived, landing on the thatched roof of the outhouse thirty feet below, and went on to the road where a crowd had already collected. Among them I spotted my uncle Sarat Pal and handed the gun over to him".

These testimonies clearly emphasise that the policemen went on a looting spree as soon as they moved into the Pal residence after scaring away the inmates with gunfire. The police, however, insists that the dacoits had actually raided the house



Ratan Chandra Roy

engaging them in an encounter in which both sides exchanged fire, but the dacoits escaped. The villagers think that these explanations are afterthoughts. They argue that if the OC had been serious about catching the dacoits he would have had come better equipped and with a larger force, not with six men of which one was in plain dress. They also deride the police claims of laying an ambush for the dacoits by pointing out that what they really did was to bottle up the two people in the village who could have had offered most resistance to the dacoits. Neither was the help of the villagers sought. If the dacoits had raided the Pal residence, how was it that the inmates did not see them? If there was an encounter where have those empty shells of the bullets fired by the dacoits gone? No wonder, the villagers have dubbed the claims as "the fantasy of phantom dacoits".

And yet, it is hard to believe that an officer-in-charge of a police station was taking his men to a village to loot the people so brazenly. It is also possible that some of Pal's affluence may have come from deals that are not strictly legal. He always had good relations with the police till they soured in January. Why? A row over kickbacks? Nobody knows for sure. However, the presence of Nibaran Bal, a police constable assigned to another police station and long known as a conduit between the police and the underworld, in plain dress, appears to have encouraged such speculation. One assumption is that the police wanted to settle things with Sarat Pal and Nibaran was asked to negotiate the deal as the OC cooled off in Suren's place. But, the policemen apparently went beyond their brief.

THE villagers worked themselves up to a frenzy when the inmates of the Pal house told them that the policemen were looting. The mob swelled to over 500. They surrounded a ground floor corner room in Pal's house where five policemen, including the OC who had come to rescue his men, stood helplessly. The policemen threatened to shoot, but the mob was in such a fury that even artillery could not have had scared them away. They punched, and kicked and clubbed the cops. Some elderly residents feebly attempted to intervene but gave up when they themselves were threatened with violence. Outside, the police jeep was set ablaze. When the fury subsided, two policemen — Harish Sarkar and Nibaran Bal—were dead. The OC and two others, forcing an opening through the mob, escaped with wounds.

ALARGER contingent of policemen headed by the SDO and the SDPO and buttressed with the CPI(M) anchal pradhan of Islampur, Adhir Biswas, arrived for the second time in the village at about 10 p.m. Strangely, the local anchal pradhan, Pal of the Forward Bloc was completely ignored as the police summoned Jiten Bhowmik, 67, CPI(M) member of the local panchayat for his assistance in persuading the inmates of the Pal house to vacate the building for the police to pick up the corpses. Bhowmik remembers: "I circled the house once and found all the doors and windows closed. A policeman who detected a small crack in one of the windows said, 'Guess it's open, and you can reach it by climbing on my back'. Immediately, he went down on all fours. I slipped through the window, reaching the room where the corpses lay spread-eagled in a pool of blood, their eyes pulled out of their sockets, the arms almost severed, and blood oozing out from the gaping wounds all over their bodies. The police entered, retrieved two rifles and a revolver (the police say the mob had snatched them away) lying by the side of the bodies, and then





villagers inside, arrested two people. Bhantu and Indramohan".

Meanwhile, the villagers had also been massing before the house. They would not allow either the charred jeep or the bodies to be removed until the policemen had been punished for the attack. After some hassles and promising action, the CPI(M) pradhan, Biswas, finally persuaded the villagers to let the police take the corpses. The jeep remained (it was towed away seven days later). In the meantime, the police however, arrested one person—Ramesh Modak, a BSF personnel posted in Assam who had come to the village on leave—from the crowd.

At the police station, the other policemen were throbbing with tension and anger. Some tore off their uniforms. Others stamped all over the place with hate in their face and murder on their lips. Seeing the bodies, they grew even more furious and demanded orders to raid the villages. In the confusion, a policeman fired in the direction where Bhowmik, Biswas, the SDO and the SDPO were talking, missing Bhowmik narrowly.

At dawn on Monday April 7, the SP Avasthi and the additional SP Vinode Sharma arrived at the police headquarters followed by a van load of armed police. The reinforcements brought by them soon joined the other policemen in demanding revenge. Thumping the desk, they repeatedly asked the officers to lead them to the villages. The situation was close to a mutiny. By then, a large crowd, mostly the residents of a nearby police colony where one of the dead policemen Nibaran lived, had filled the police station compound. The friends and the family members of Nibaran in the crowd demanded explanations from the SP for the death. "Why did the OC go with such a small force? Why did he take Nibaran with him although he did not belong to his police station?" they asked. "You have got my father killed." Nibaran's son screamed. By 7.30 a.m. the crowd had swelled to over 1,000 and inclu-

ded quite a few local leaders of different political Parties. Particularly vocal was Gautam Gupta, a Congress (I) activist, who, however, claims that he had gone there to diffuse the tension. Soon the crowd started pelting stones and smashing the window panes, and, finally surged into the police station pushing and punching both the SP and the ASP on their way to the lock up. They wanted the arrested persons. Bhantu, Indramohan and Ramesh to be handed over to them. "If you don't", they warned, "we will get them ourselves from the lock up". All this encouraged the policemen to become even more defiant. "Jai Ma Kall" shouted the policemen. The crowd shouted back: "Death to the easterners". As all the pleas for restraint went unheeded, the ASP, Sharma, offered to lead the policemen to the villages to trace the murderers, hoping this would soothe them. Soon they were out on the road.

Queues waiting for re-act



RATAN Chandra Roy, 38, the headmaster of the Matikunda Primary School was returning home at Balancha village at about 10.30 a.m. when he spotted a police van parked on a bridge some 1,000 yards away. The policemen were chasing the pedestrians bound for the Monday market at Matikunda. They were also snatching cycles from those who were on wheels. After some time, nine or ten policemen strayed into his house and started beating him with the butt of the rifles. "I told them I was a schoolmaster but they went on beating me. As they dragged me towards the van, my 78-year-old mother, my wife, my son — all fell over me. They pushed my mother aside and she fell unconscious; they kicked my wife apart. My son barely escaped being shot."

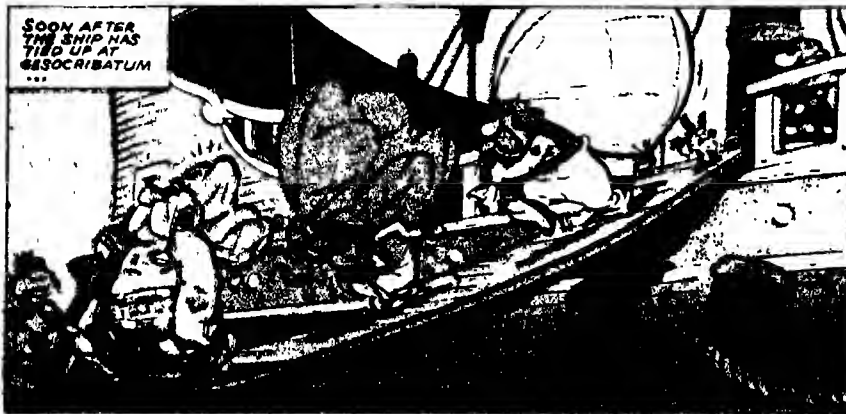
Vandalism began as soon as the policemen left the limits of Islampur town. Their first act of carnage was setting a betel vine on fire at Balancha, one and half kilometers from the town. They followed it up with more arson and looting as they rolled on. Satish Sharma, the manager of a local co-operative shop at Ringkua village says that a group of policemen came to his shop and asked for water. "After they drank it, one of them pulled out a match box from his pocket, lit a bundle of sticks, and threw them on the thatched roof before leaving".

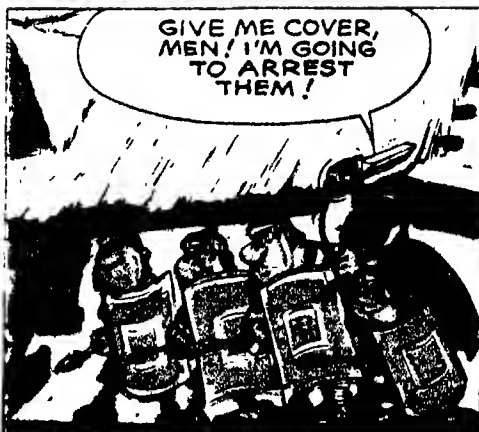
The police did as they wished. If they saw flames dying down at some place, they would pour more gasoline to revive the fire. The looting and plundering went on unabated. They threw Suren's youngest son Biswanath, 14, into a burning heap of hay with his hands tied behind his back. Another policeman, however, pulled him out, and cut him loose after he had sustained serious burns.

From one village to another it is the same sordid story. At Borogochha village Bholanath Pal mourns the death of his wife Kaileswari holding in his arms their five-day old daughter wrapped in a burnt rag. Kaileswari died on Wednesday April 9. The child was born just as the arson started on Monday. "They kicked her as she tried to run. I should have taken her to the hospital then, but did not, fearing further reprisals. Finally, when I took her, it was too late", Bholanath says. At Gondolgochha, 100-year old Jalaluddin saw the house where he was born crumble before his eyes. "All others fled. I was slow. I am an old man. They took me out under a tree and punched me till I went down," he said.

The language of force was direct, savage and mindless. There can be no excuse, political or personal, for the orgy of wanton destruction in which the police indulged for over three hours. What has really been lost in the village of Islampur are not just some huts and shops but the very substance of the civilised notion that the police protects. Faith is the casualty.

Photographs by Tooshat Pandit





ALARM IS DULY RAISED,
AND THE HARBOUR OF
GESOCRIBATUM
ECHOES TO THE SOUND
OF CONTRADICTORY
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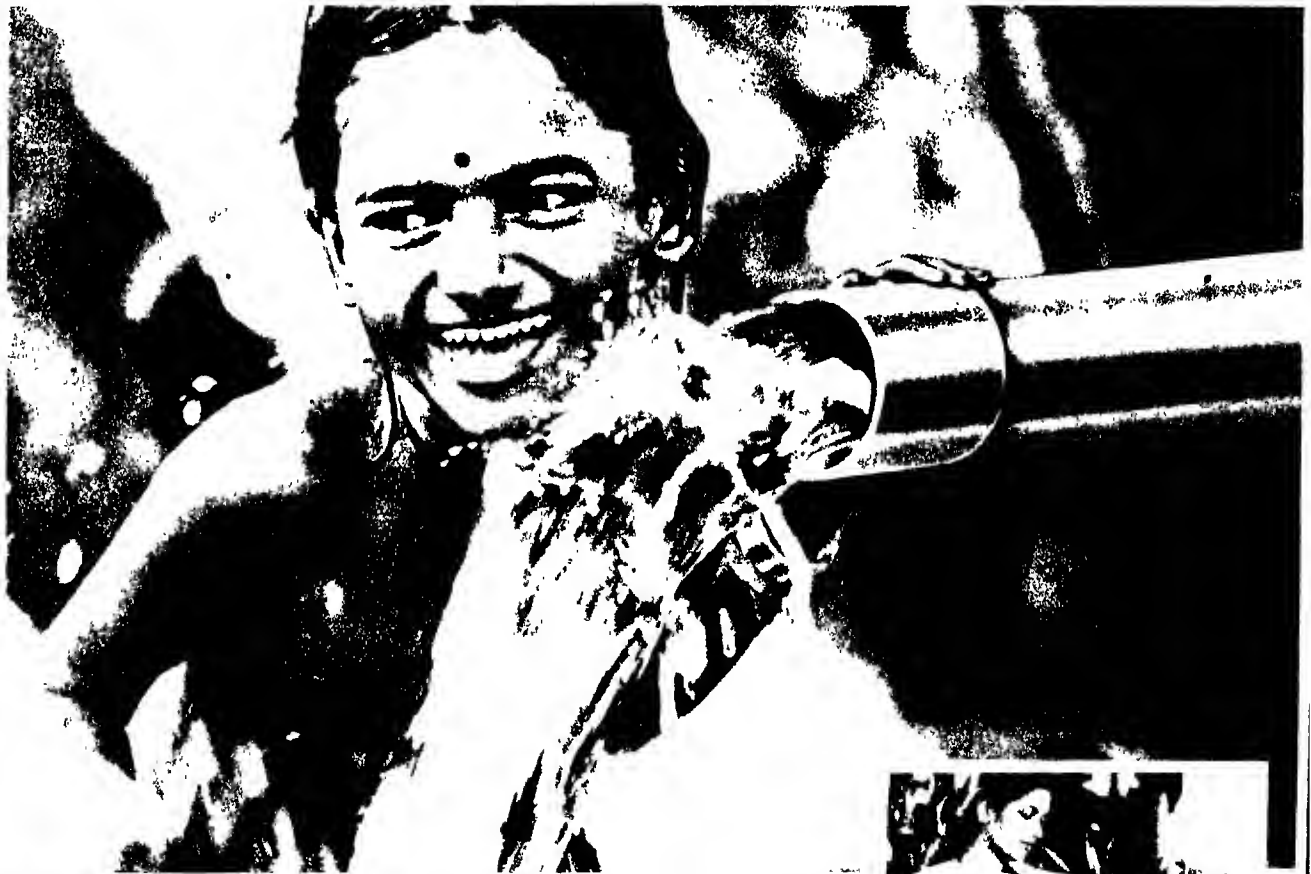
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Leading the blind

By RAJENDRA MATHUR

AFTER voting massively for Mrs Gandhi—and in a country as big and variegated as India, the support of 43 people out of 100 ought to be considered massive—the nation is looking over its shoulders and wondering if it has done the right thing. Prices are rising and Mrs Gandhi has been doing nothing. Populist leftism, which saw her through the seventies, has fallen by the wayside, and the 20-point programme is a dodoistic revival. To connoisseurs of Mrs Gandhi's career, her inaction is not strange; she rarely acts unless she is at bay. The people at large are aware of this, but they would rather not remember the inconvenient truth, for Mrs Gandhi is still India's best bet for action. It does not matter if her action is convulsive and sporadic, for it is convulsive action which has been pulling us out of tight spots ever since 1962. Steady action needs a steady philosophy of growth bringing in steady dividends, and none of the mainstream Parties of India is left with any such philosophy. In that sense, the election of Mrs Gandhi signifies the end of ideas and of ideology, and the beginning of an era of pan-Indian blindness. We all want Mrs Gandhi to act, but does any intellectual or economist or would-be prophet have the foggiest idea of how he would have acted if he had been entrusted with a mandate as massive as Mrs Gandhi's? If a bunch of blind men were to be asked to elect a leader who could deal most successfully with a tiger who had broken loose amongst them, they would of course elect a person with the surest convulsive instincts.

Would the picture be much rosier if the Janata Party had won, or more impossibly, the Lok Dal? Luckily, an answer to this question is not hypothetical; it can be deduced with a fair degree of accuracy on the basis of what has been happening to the opposition since its rout three months ago. Here are some of the scenarios of the road which we did not take.

If the Janata Party had won, Mr Jagjivan Ram would now be the Prime Minister of India, fulfilling—like Morarji Desai and Charan Singh before him—the intensest, unstated ambition of his life. (They all want to become Prime Ministers without knowing what they would do with it.) And

in less than six months, the works would have begun.

Jagjivan Ram would not have liked to serve as the Harijan facade of the RSS; he would be crediting the Janata victory to his own personal stature rather than to the cadres of the Sangh. The Sangh would be boiling with inner rage, for Jagjivan Ram would be describing them as the proverbial dog beneath the bullock cart who thought he was hauling the whole load. Party elections would still be out of the question and committees would continue to be ad hoc. Jagjivan Ram would perhaps be trying to Congressise the Janata Party by engineering defections from the Congress (I) and Congress (U). They would have taken place even if he did not try. Chavan and Chandrashekhar would have fretted at the spectacle of Cong-



gressmen uniting under the banner of Jagjivan Ram, but mild-mannered Swaran Singh would be extending his fullest cooperation. Realignment would be the need of the hour, for Raj Narain, sore with Charan Singh, would need a new home, and Madhu Limaye would be seething with a new thesis. In the hierarchy of untouchability, the Congress (I), the RSS and the Lok Dal traitors would be placed differently by different factions.

If the Lok Dal had won, the works would have started immediately. Raj Narain would have instantly found his new mission: the demolition of Charan Singh. "The dictatorship of Charan Singh", he would have thundered, "is much worse than the dictatorships of Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai put together."

If Jagjivan Ram had been the Prime Minister, we would be witnessing strange bedfellows uniting

to dislodge him. Charan Singh would be making overtures to the RSS and the RSS might be joining hands with Mrs Gandhi to pass a motion of no-confidence against Jagjivan Ram. Or the Prime Minister might be making a deal with Mrs Gandhi, promising the abolition of the special courts and sundry other prosecutions.

Newspapers would be informing us of these mighty and tempestuous happenings day after day, while nothing really would be happening.

Jagjivan Ram would have been as devoid of ideas as Mrs Gandhi is; no man holds back his originality until his seventy-second year, waiting to unleash it after he has become Prime Minister. Charan Singh, on the other hand, would have gleefully leapt into several abysses without looking. His Government would have come unstuck in no time, because drastic measures need prior preparation and the creation of a political base to sustain them, for which Charan Singh would have no aptitude. The measures would boomerang on him and finish him off, provided that he had not already been done in by his Hanuman. Inaction and whimsical action would have brought us to the same point: the point of non-government. Following a different route, Mrs Gandhi too compulsively arrives at this very point.

It should be obvious from the above that the alternative to Mrs Gandhi next time cannot be the spent forces of contemporary opposition. Having proved barren, mindless and factious once, they do not deserve another chance, for they are sure to repeat 1977-79. Qualitatively, they are bound to be poorer than Mrs Gandhi. And yet it is strange to see heptagenarian leaders posing themselves as the wave of the future.

The alternative is yet unborn. It shall be born when new political forces come up from below and assert themselves. When Harijans really mobilise as a political force, their authentic leader would surely not be Jagjivan Ram, who has been for 34 years a part of the establishment. When farmers cultivating 15 to 20 acres land together more effectively, would they still have a hare-brained Charan Singh as their leader? Would the opposition have no better tactician than factious Madhu Limaye? It is difficult to believe that the nation has become so frustratingly barren.

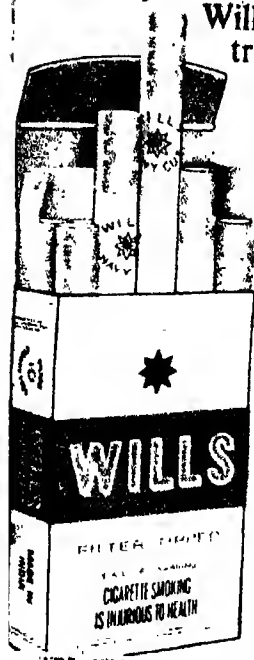
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Ministers in the making

THERE will be major changes in the Central Cabinet soon after the state elections. At least two or three Central Ministers are expected to go to their respective states after the state elections to assume new responsibilities, so there will be a few vacancies. Some important Ministries have also not been filled in as yet while some of the present Ministers are likely to be shifted to other Ministries according to the assessment of the Congress (I) High Command in the light of their performance during the last four months.

Among the Central Ministers who are expected to go to their own states J. B. Patnaik seems to be a certainty. The Congress (I) is almost sure to get an absolute majority in Orissa and Patnaik, as the "most trusted" politician from Orissa, will be selected as Chief Minister of the state. He remained with Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay during the days of their crisis and however hard Biju Patnaik and Nandini Satpathy may try, it will be impossible for them to weaken JB's position in the Delhi Durbar immediately.

Giani Zail Singh's name is also being mentioned for Chief Ministership. If he goes to Punjab, either Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao or Mr C. M. Stephen will take charge of the Union Home Ministry. Zail Singh is still considered to be very close to Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay — but they cannot be satisfied with his performance in Parliament. Some important persons close to the Party High Command feel that Zail Singh would be more at home in the Chandigarh Secretariat and Punjab Assembly than in the Union Home Ministry and Parliament.

Will P. C. Sethi be also sent back to his own state? There are suggestions that because of his ill health he would do better in Bhopal than in Delhi. But nothing will depend on this suggestion and everything will be decided on the assessment of Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay. They would definitely not like to make V. C. Shukla the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. But who will then be the Chief Minister in Bhopal? Dr Sankar Dayal Sharma? That is also most unlikely. Then would not Sethi's name come up naturally?

Of all the Central Ministers, Narasimha Rao, Pranab Mukherjee and Vasant Sathe are reported to be considered "most successful" by the Party High Command. Their performances, both in the Secretariat and in Parliament, are



By BARUN SENGUPTA

being rated as "first class" and "high second class" respectively. With virtually no experience in international diplomacy what Mr Rao has done so far as Mrs Gandhi's Foreign Minister is considered to be "excellent". Pranab Mukherjee's performance as the leader of the Rajya Sabha, where the Congress (I) was in a minority till the other day, is being considered as "first class". It is being said that what he achieved in Paris during his short visit is a "miracle" — though facts of this



Vasant Sathe

"miraculous achievement" are not being disclosed immediately due to security reasons. Vasant Sathe was given the formidable task of building up a rapport with the Press, which, the High Command thinks he has been able to do with tact and intelligence to a large extent.

But all these "successful" Ministers hold very important portfolios. So, it will not be easy to shift them to other important Ministries. If Zail Singh goes to Punjab and Mr Rao is made the Home Minister, then Mrs Gandhi may personally take over the External Affairs Ministry. There is talk that Pranab Mukherjee will be given the Ministry of Revenue and Banking again, by bringing out these two important departments from the Finance Ministry altogether. But who will then be given the Ministry of Foreign Trade which has become an empire in itself and which is expected to be enlarged

further in the near future? Sathe can be given some other additional Ministries, but in the midst of his first assignment the High Command is most unlikely to shift him to any other Ministry however important that may be. It should be remembered that none of these "successful Ministers" are known to be 100 per cent Sanjay-men as are A. B. A. Gani Khan Chowdhury, Zail Singh and A. P. Sharma.

Some new persons will also have to be taken into the Cabinet. This time, it is expected to be a "long term" arrangement (at least for two years) and as such no Minister is expected to be in temporary charge. More Ministers will naturally be needed to fill the vacancies. In circles close to the High Command the names of Sukhadia, Saive and Bahuguna are still being mentioned. Of course, if Bahuguna "tries to play any trick" during the Uttar Pradesh state election then his future in the Congress (I) will be completely sealed.

Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay will face more difficulties in selecting the Chief Ministers than in nominating the new Central Ministers. The Congress (I) has no accepted leader in any of the nine states and in all the states the prospective leaders are vying with each other to prove their loyalty to the High Command. But the High Command knows and during the last months has clearly realised that only loyalty will not do. The question of tact, efficiency and acceptability will also have to be considered. Recently, Sanjay is reported to have commented: 'Nobody is my man. Like any other organisation our Party would also like to select the right person for the right job'. The main question is: Who is the right person?

No doubt, efficiency will be considered. The Congress (I) will have to run the state governments and the country. The problems are vast and the situation is very complicated and tense. No single leader, however, efficient he or she may be, can tackle this situation alone. Efficient assistants and helping hands are needed. But, in spite of this, loyalty and reliability will also be important factors during the selection of Chief Ministers and Central Ministers in the month of May. The High Command would not definitely like to boost anyone (however efficient he may be) who may try to harm them in future or may change sides in the question of succession.

NEPAL: RE-ENTER DEMOCRACY

By BHOLA CHATTERJI



King Birendra



B. P. Koirala

In another few days, May 2, to be precise, the people of Nepal would troop to the polls to decide whether the authoritarian Partyless panchayat or a multi-Party system of polity should rule the country. For the first time in the history of the country 72 lakh voters would on the basis of universal adult franchise participate in a national referendum the significance of which could hardly be overstated. Even a cursory glance at the Nepalese political scene would leave no room for doubt that 1980 is destined to be a turning-point in the kingdom's contemporary history. If 1950 was a watershed in the life of the people, 1980 is most likely to determine whether Nepal would remain a single political entity or break up into as many mutually hostile political units as there are ethnic and linguistic groups.

The battle lines have been drawn, contending passions aroused and the aspirants for the electorate's sanction are grimly biding their time to make or mar things. And that in the name of the King, country and welfare of the nation. A bloody revolution catapulted Nepal into the 20th cen-

tury in 1950, it is now set to make up for two lost decades through yet another revolution, albeit by consent. Sounds paradoxical? No reason why it should if one takes a close look at the men who are in the limelight, all the circumstances and, of course, the dumb multitude that drags an existence which holds out little hope and no promise.

By common consent the Eton-Harvard-Tokyo-educated 34-year-old King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, tenth in the line of the Shah dynasty founded by Prithvi Narayan Shah, and 65-year-old former, first and so far last elected Prime Minister, Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, are the two men who matter most in the life of the ruggedly beautiful land of the Himalayas. On a collision course until recently, the two are now in a rapport that not a few look askance at. The responsive relations between King Birendra and Koirala are at once the most puzzling and reassuring factor in the Nepalese equation, depending on which side of the fence one is.

At the time Koirala, the undisputed leader of the now technically banned (the panchayat system forbids

the existence of political Parties) Nepali Congress, made the 1950-51 revolution, King Birendra was an infant. His grandfather, the late King Tribhuvan, was virtually a prisoner in the hands of Mohan Shumsher, the last of the hereditary Rana Prime Ministers who despotically ruled Nepal for a century. King Tribhuvan cast his lot with the Koirala-led democratic forces to rid the country of the stranglehold Rana feudalism had put on it as well as to liberate the institution of monarchy. Between then and King Birendra's accession to the throne in January 1972, following the death of his father King Mahendra who had sent Nepalese democracy to the block, the political situation had undergone a sea-change. The Palace, which had assumed absolute power, was locked in a fierce struggle with Koirala who was determined to restore Nepal to democracy.

For better or worse the developments since have facilitated the initiation of a meaningful dialogue between King Birendra and Koirala. This has eventually encouraged them to identify the areas of agreement regarding the basic problem of Nepa-

lese politics—restitution of democratic government to the people. Much to the chagrin of the Partyless panchayat faithfuls and even some of his own friends, Koirala's repeated emphasis has in recent times been on two points: (a) King Birendra's bona fides are not suspect; (b) the need for effective cooperation between the Palace and the people to get the country back on the rails. As Koirala recently said at a referendum rally in Bhairahwa, the kingdom would not be able to come to grips with the crisis that confronted it unless democratic rule was re-established. Equally true was the fact that neither democracy nor monarchy would survive without mutual cooperation. More, he emphasized, in the given context "monarchy's role in nation-building is paramount". He has at the same time cautioned whoever would care to listen that since "monarchy is an institution acceptable to all...it should not be involved in any controversy".

THIS was no music in the panchayat exponent's ear. The advocates of the Partyless panchayat democracy, an evident contradiction in terms, have been continually harping on the note that it enjoys the King's unreserved support. For the system is the only effective answer to the kingdom's problem of politics. Through public speeches, Press statements and cleverly manipulated reports in *The Rising Nepal* the country's only government-owned English language daily, broad hints are given to the gullible that, whatever might have been the developments since the King's referendum announcement on May 24 last year, the Palace counts on them to pull it off. With crude cunning the panchayat camp exploits every available forum to sell the line that the Palace and the panchayat system are but two sides of the same coin. In fact the security and safety of the Crown and the country are inseparably linked up with the continuance of the panchayat system. As former nominated Prime Minister Tulsī Giri, one of the most sharp operators in the panchayat camp, put it some days ago, "threat to it (Nepal's national interest), if any, would come, not from outside, but from fifth columnists such as the banned Nepali Congress".

Taken at their face value the raucous cries of the panchayat promoters would suggest that a favourable referendum verdict is a foregone conclusion. Tap any of the senior panchayat leaders, for instance, Matrika Prasad Koirala (elder half-brother of B. P. Koirala), Kirtinid Bista, Tulsī Giri, Nagendra Prasad Rijal (all former nominated Prime Ministers) and the present Prime Minister, Surya Bahadur Thapa, and he would reel off a fantastic volume of statistical data to establish that the Partyless panchayat system inheres in it all the virtues and none of the vices of every conceivable brand of democratic polity.

Their argument is that King

Mahendra had introduced the panchayat system "because nationalism and democracy were difficult to maintain under a multi-Party system". Tulsī Giri would go a step further, convinced as he is that nothing is unfair in war and love, and assert that "the panchayat system was peculiar to the Nepalese people and was not less democratic than the democratic system obtaining in any of the rich countries". Comments are unnecessary, considering that it will not be very easy to find Giri's peer even among amoral panchayat promoters who habitually make a virtue of political opportunism.

Talking of Giri, one cannot help mentioning that few Nepalese politicians can match his capacity for rationalizing even the most blatant act of perfidy and personal aggrandizement. More than once he has been the country's nominated Prime Minister only to be given the sack for mucking up matters, internal as well as external. Until recently he was under a cloud for his alleged involvement in what is known as the "carpet scandal"—a multi-million rupee export racket that made a great stir in the country. The former Prime Minister had maintained a low profile since the May 24 referendum declaration last year. Giri is reported to have told some politicians that, as soon as he would be able to get himself absolved from the "carpet scandal", he would expose all about the graft, corruption and misuse of public money men in high places indulged in. Not only that, he would spare no pains to unhinge the Partyless panchayat system which was a "fraud" on the people. Most panchayat leaders hold that Giri who cuts up rough at little or no provocation and who reportedly enjoys the support of the now disbanded Rastrawadi Vidhyarthi Mandal, an outfit of fanatically panchayat supporting musclemen, is indeed a thorn in their flesh. But there is little they could do about it, for Giri has patrons who are too powerful to be touched.

THAT the panchayat camp is a house divided against itself is not exactly news. Unlike Alexander Dumas's *Three Musketeers*, every one of the senior panchayat leaders stands for himself, for the Palace's patronage, for personal power and all that goes with it. Matrika Prasad, otherwise a suave person, is a panchayat campaigner not because he has convinced himself that the system is based on sound principles and guarantees a cure for what ails the country. After all, he was president of the Nepali Congress at the time of the 1950-51 revolution; and he could not possibly have unlearned all the lessons of history he had learnt the hard way. But then, lack of will to undergo suffering and make sacrifice, the desire for power and the good life plus family conflict have landed him in the company of men not one of whom would hesitate to consign him to limbo when it comes to the crunch.

Matrika Prasad is not unaware of this. He is also alive to the fact that he could never occupy the Prime Minister's chair unless the Palace desired it and that his panchayat colleagues would oppose him severally and collectively. And he is aware that the present Prime Minister would feel no qualms about deserting the panchayat camp should the referendum verdict go in favour of the multi-Party system.

In terms of resources, however, the panchayat camp is apparently very firm on its legs. Knowledgeable sources confirm that the panchayat propagandists have so far collected about (Nepalese) rupees (100 Indian rupees-145 Nepalese rupees) one crore fifty lakh. Others apart, the panchayat camp is aided and abetted by all manner of vested interests, not excluding a sizable number of former Ranas, landed interests, businessmen and those who have during the 18-year panchayat rule benefitted by their active association with the system. It would not do to suggest that the system has no committed supporters. It has and the bulk of them are from the officially constituted network of basic panchayat units in the rural and urban areas.

It is a hard fact that the panchayat camp also has allies in the royal family, King Birendra excluded. Some very influential members of the sprawling royal family, who control between them the most sensitive and complex segments of the administrative apparatus, have a high stake, both political and economic, in the authoritarian system. Small wonder that nothing would stop them from throwing a spanner in the works. And the ramified organizational structure the panchayat system has spawned over the years, particularly in the remote hill areas where the 20th century still has a tenuous foothold, would be of considerable help to the anti-democratic forces. Intrigues and conspiratorial politics, exploitation, physical violence and the nearly total absence of any effective opposition have generated a climate of fear and fatalism. Continuous drumming on the point that the institution of monarchy and the panchayat system are indissolubly interlinked has not gone to waste. Could it be denied that until the other day King Birendra was the most eloquent champion of the panchayat system.

The picture has another side. The panchayat camp no longer enjoys the King's active patronage. Not that the King has suddenly grown tired of exercising absolute power. Rather a combination of factors has obliged him not to ignore the writing on the wall. He knows it quite well that a section of panchayat hardliners and externally inspired forces of destabilization had a hand in the arson and violence that rocked Kathmandu last May. Neither is he in the dark about the aspirations of some of his close relations, not to speak of their extensive financial interests. Also, if Iran reminds of the tragedy that might befall a politician

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Koirala's words and deeds assure him that the democrats form a dike between anarchy and the institution of monarchy. He is convinced that Koirala is not talking for effect when he says that the Palace and the people must pull together for an effective response to both internal and external challenges.

Of the numerous other factors which are likely to queer the panchayat camp's pitch, the blighted economy is certainly a major one. The performance of the economy in the last two decades has been generally indifferent and, at times, positively counter-productive. In spite of the steady inflow of fairly large quantum of foreign aid and assistance, reasonable mobilization of local resources, elaborate planning and what have you, the economy has refused to oblige the panchayat administration. If official economic experts who are wonted to making understatement, for instance, Y. P. Pant, call the economy "unsatisfactory" others would say that it is in downright bad shape. The fact that Nepal, which has all along been exporting food, "seemed likely", as Lok Raj Baral put it, to be converted "into a food importing country" speaks volumes for the difficult state of the economy. The panchayat government's management of the economy is a sad account of utter inefficiency, wasted opportunities and wrong priorities, of acts of malfeasance and misfeasance. It seems the economic policy formulators do not even have an understanding of the cruel problem of poverty that smites the people. The acting president of the Nepali Congress, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, is not far from wrong when he says that the 19-year panchayat rule has only increased the already massive volume of poverty and unemployment. As he said at a Pokhara Bar Association meet recently, "the rich had become richer and the poor poorer under the panchayat system".

To illustrate the point, five families, not of Nepalese origin, have, during panchayat rule, literally climbed from rags to riches. They are still making their pile, thanks to the highly profitable two-way traffic between them and the panchayat leaders. And where the poverty line gets drawn is anybody's guess. The economic stagnation is much too severe to escape even the most superficial observer's notice. Soaring prices, a shrinking employment market and nil growth rate indeed would not help narrow the panchayat camp's widening credibility gap.

If cowardice is infectious, courage is perhaps more so. For proof, just step into the Nepali Congress' office at Ranipokhari. With each day that passes, increasing numbers of people from almost every walk of life come there to identify themselves with the democratic forces. Streams of young men and women, their eyes sparkling with hope, come there every day for guidance and military assistance that the

leaders might give them. Their requests are modest; campaign literature, posters and strips of blue cloth—blue happens to be the election colour allotted to the multi-Party camp. More often than not they draw a blank, for the Party coffers are always empty. A few words of encouragement, instructions to make do with locally collected resources are all that Krishna Prasad spares the young idealists before ordering them to remote areas, to reach some of which might require quite a few days' trekking.

The Nepali Congress, its long years in the wilderness notwithstanding, has a large cadre of committed workers. Its organisational base, however, is not as strong as might be desired. To make up for this there is the charismatic Koirala who projects a picture of quiet confidence. He has no doubt about the outcome



Matrika Prasad Koirala

of the referendum; and he firmly believes that King Birendra will not break his word. As he sees it, the lingering shreds of suspicion, if any, have been dispelled by the King's grant of general amnesty. Which, in fact, has put the panchayat camp at a disadvantage and done the democrats a good turn. It may not be irrelevant here to touch on other groups and individuals that have made common cause with the democratic forces. For instance, Dilli Raman Begmi, along with former Prime Ministers Tanka Prasad Acharya and K. I. Singh. Besides, there are the communist groups, both pro-Beijing and pro-Moscow. True, numerically and otherwise the pro-Moscow communists led by Keshar Jung Rayamajhi count for little. But this does not apply to the group that

functions under Monmohan Adhikari's leadership. Founder of the communist movement in Nepal, Adhikari is said to be the leader of one of the pro-Beijing groups. The fact of the matter is that Adhikari, who is Beijing oriented, is the only Nepali communist leader with a certain following. Admitting his friendly attitude toward China, Adhikari told me, in no uncertain terms, that he was first and last a Nepal patriot and that the point at issue currently was not communism but the restoration of democracy. In the circumstances the only course open to him was to work for the success of the multi-Party camp, of which, Adhikari readily conceded, Koirala was the unrivalled leader. That is why he chose to cooperate with the Nepali Congress.

This is not to suggest that the Nepali Congress will just rom through the referendum. It is hamstrung by forces and factors that just cannot be wished away. Relentless persecution and suffering over a two-decade long period have not left the Party unscathed. Dogged, almost all along by the interminable process of fission, fusion and fission, it is certainly in no position to claim that it is as purposefully united today as it was when it won, hands down, the country's first general elections in 1959. Lack of resources, intra-Party conflict and, above all, the large gaps in the leadership chain have had their adverse effect. Could it be denied that the distance, albeit in terms of leadership qualities, between Koirala and the rest is much too great? Another complicating factor is the presence of the big powers. They are not disinterested onlookers; each has its own set of reasons to take more than mere academic interest in the goings-on in Nepal. It is just that some do it brazenly while others prefer to act on the sly. This is something the democrats can hardly afford to ignore.

Be that as it may, it does not call for much inside knowledge to say that things will never be the same again in Nepal, irrespective of the referendum verdict. Even if the panchayat group gets through, the kingdom will not revert to the authoritarian system it suffered from these past two decades. For that matter, a carbon-copy of the Westminster variety of Parliamentary framework will not immediately become operative should the people opt for the multi-Party system. But one thing is sure and it is that post-referendum Nepal, no matter what nomenclature its political system might adopt, will have no more than two alternatives to choose from. Either its political system must depend for its survival on the people ensuring their participation in the decision-making process, or it must brace itself to meet the challenge of the forces of disruption and disintegration. King Birendra knows it, so does Koirala. Which, in a way, explains why the two are talking on nearly identical terms.

Move over Zia

But who will take his place ?



Raghu Rai

PAKISTAN's military regime was never regarded as a stable political enterprise in any major capital, with possible exception of Peking. The Chinese leaders have, over the past two decades, amply demonstrated their fondness for Pakistan's uniformed Presidents, but even they must now be developing serious doubts about Zia's viability. Developments in Pakistan over the last month indicate that the dictator's isolation is virtually complete. The General is more unpopular than he was at the time of Bhutto's execution a year ago. Undoubtedly aware of this fact, he recently told Pakistani journalists: "I am not a know-all. There are many Pakistanis who are abler than I, who are more capable than I, more competent than I. They must come at the right time to take off from where I leave. But I must leave at the proper place and not just run away". The fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of the country believes that there is no time like the present for the General to depart. Zia's refusal to share power gradually isolated him from the right-wing political Parties. Many of these have lost all credibility for having collaborated with the military in the first place. In reality they were cynically utilised by the Generals who felt the need for a modicum of civilian support in the period leading up to Bhutto's execution. Their services were dispensed afterwards. Today even

the neo-fascist Jamaat-i-Islami has withdrawn its support and called for a civilian Government.

The new crisis is clearly a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Zia was confronted with a real dilemma. The fact that hatred for his regime is almost universal inside Pakistan meant that he could not utilise the Soviet intervention to win mass support. The response of the Pakistani people to Afghanistan has been extremely muted. Many of Zia's opponents cherish the hope that the Red Army might solve their problems with a quick thrust onward to Islamabad. In private they will even say so. Immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Pentagon and the US wanted to transform Pakistan into a US military base. This display of indecent haste further limited Zia's options. A regime as unpopular and unrepresentative as his could not afford a decision which might further inflame public opinion. So the US plan was rejected on the grounds that the \$175 million being offered was 'peanuts'. At the same time Pakistani civil servants made it known to the United States that most of the aid should, in any event, be routed through China, which was still regarded as the country's 'oldest ally'. The State Department was displeased and talk of replacing Zia began to be heard in the corridors. Aware of what was taking place, the desperate dictator threw

out some feelers to the Soviet Union. He offered to allow mutually agreed inspection teams to be stationed on the Pak-Afghan border and stressed Pakistan's commitment to 'non-alignment'. The Cuban Foreign Minister recently visited Pakistan to assess the situation, but Moscow itself has yet to respond to the overtures.

Between 14 and 17 March there was a half-baked attempt at a coup designed to topple Zia. It failed and a Chinese military delegation in the country led by Xiao Ke, Vice-Minister of Defence, pledged in public support 'as ever' the struggle of Pakistan 'and its armed forces' to safeguard the country. Zia dismissed two of his senior military colleagues and appointed six new Lieutenant-Generals. The two dismissed men, General Faiz Ali Chishti and Ghulam Hassan, were relieved of their military commands and dismissed from the Federal Cabinet. General Chishti had been the mastermind behind the coup which toppled Bhutto in July 1977. An extremely aggressive and self-confident officer, he had clearly chafed at the succession of mistakes made by Zia. General Ghulam Hassan, a Pathan General, was the Co-ordinator of the Intelligence Services and third most powerful General in the country.

Some weeks prior to his removal, Chishti had visited North America and Britain. While in London he had been unusually frank in informal discussions with Pakistanis resident in London. He stated that Zia was a disaster for the country; that his incessant lies were an embarrassment to the military; that the army was in a demoralised state and "I've reached the end of my patience". Whether Chishti was being groomed to take over from Zia by the US State Department is an open question, but American journalists had evinced a remarkable interest in his movements since last December. Chishti remained confident even after his removal. A friend who rang him from London and asked what he intended to do was told: "I'm at least the elected President of the Rawalpindi Golf Club!"

The break-up of the unity of the top echelons of the army is the strongest manifestation yet of the crisis afflicting Pakistan. Zia is seen as a liability by the United States. But who can replace him? Another coup would not necessarily improve matters, though it might provide a bridge to the leadership of Bhutto's People's Party, which would win a majority in any election. But an election could prove to be an expensive gamble. It would unleash a set of mass mobilisation and in Baluchistan it would return a nationalist Government.

TARIQ ALI, London

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The cigarette war

Smoking injures the vendors, too



Dharna of cigarette retailers opposite the Municipal Corporation

"NEXT time you stop to buy a packet of cigarettes, think about the poor vendor's economic exploitation at the hands of manufacturers. Come to think of it, the courteous vendor is obliging the owners of cigarette industry. What does the vendor get in return for selling the cigarettes? Hardly anything; eight paise as gross profit on a packet means a daily gross income of only Rs 16 if a vendor sells as many as 200 packets. And most vendors don't sell as many as 200 packets; they subsist on the sales of bidi, pan matchboxes and cold drinks. This is grave injustice and we decided to do something about it", the organising secretary of the Mumbai Bidi-Tambakhu Vyapari Sangh, Mr Harish-chandra Shetye, told SUNDAY.

To press their demands, the Sangh launched an indefinite strike on April 4 and ever since not a single vendor in Bombay has reportedly traded in cigarettes. Till the time of going to press, there has been no perceptible softening of stands on either side—the 14,500 vendors represented by the Mumbai Bidi-Tambakhu Vyapari Sangh and the cigarette manufacturers by the Cigarette Manufacturers' Association. A compromise seems to have been ruled out and each side is apparently waiting for the other to surrender. The prelude to the strike was the dharna outside the factories of the two major cigarette manufacturers in the city—Golden Tobacco and Godfrey Phillips on March 27.

The Sangh's most important demand is that the commission for vendors must be raised to 15 per cent of a cigarette packet's market price and the wholesalers be given a commission of 2.5 per cent. If and when the cigarette manufacturers accept this formula it would mean a gross profit of 37.5 paise for the vendor and 6.5 paise for the wholesaler on a packet of cigarettes priced at Rs 2.50. The Sangh has communicated its demand to all the five principal cigarette manufacturers; Godfrey Phillips, ITC, Golden Tobacco, National Tobacco and the Vazir Sultan Tobacco company.

The Mumbai Bidi-Tambakhu Vyapari Sangh was founded in 1968 under the leadership of George Fernandes who was responsible for initiating trade union movements in other fields too. The office bearers of the Sangh contend that over the years, cigarette vendors and wholesalers have been treated very shabbily by cigarette manufacturers. The prices of cigarettes have skyrocketed during the last decade but the vendors' commission has remained static. According to the Sangh organisers, the Government should have intervened in the matter long ago and brought an end to the "unpardonable and savage exploitation". Ashok Vaikul, the Sangh's secretary and the owner of a small cigarette shop in Bombay told SUNDAY: "We were agitating for some sort of common commission that is, trying to get for ourselves something akin to what the Government gives for all essential commodities. For instance, the grain and groceries retailers get 15 per cent. Also, lottery sellers get 15 per cent and the retailers of non-essential items like liquor get as much as 35 per cent as commission. Despite the fact that cigarettes are luxury items, on an average we only get six per cent as commission". A cigarette vendor told SUNDAY: "What I earn as commission is shameful. After sitting in the cigarette stall for more than 14 hours every day, we can't earn more than Rs 10. This is the gross profit. From this sum we have to subtract the establishment cost, among other things. Eventually, our net income works out to less than Rs 9 every day".

Ashok Vaikul is confident about the success of the strike in Bombay. He says: "We first gave the manufacturers an eight-day ultimatum to amend their rates of commissions. They did nothing. So we did what we had said we would. Since the strike not a single cigarette pack has been lifted from any of Bombay's cigarette manufacturers. We are fortunate in one way. Since smokers found it impossible to buy cigarettes, they switched over to bidis where our commission is considerably higher, bet-

ween 30 and 35 per cent. We have the strength to see this strike through".

The Sangh has now taken up the task of taking their struggle to other parts of the country. A delegation of Sangh workers came to Calcutta in the third week of April and organised a meeting which was attended by a large number of wholesalers and vendors. The Sangh proposes to organise a strike in Calcutta while the Sangh office bearers who had travelled from Bombay told SUNDAY in Calcutta: "We are happy with the response we received. We shall soon go to Delhi and Ahmedabad to meet cigarette vendors and wholesalers". On March 22, the group left for Ahmedabad.

Calcutta has roughly one lakh vendors, most of them without a proper licence issued by Corporation authorities. The initial investment is paltry enough to attract a large number of unemployed people. As a matter of fact, Calcutta is the largest cigarette selling centre in eastern India. ITC dominates the market in the region and the vendors and wholesalers are yet to form a proper union.

The Mumbai Bidi-Tambakhu Vyapari Sangh recently won a small battle against cigarette manufacturers. Sometime ago, ITC launched Classic, a luxury brand priced at Rs 10 but the vendors in Bombay refused to sell it unless they were given 15 per cent as commission. ITC did not agree to this demand and as a result vendors did not sell Classic. On the other hand, Golden Tobacco agreed to dish out a 15 per cent commission on their new product Panama Prince. As a result of this, cigarette vendors are making 28 paise as profit on every Panama Prince pack. The Sangh is also responsible for boosting the sales of Sivakasi match boxes in and around Bombay at the expense of Wimco. Sharad Rao, the Sangh's president says that the movement of cigarette vendors will soon become a national phenomenon.

R. A. Poddar, chief executive advisor of Godfrey Phillips is bitterly critical of what the Cigarette Manufacturers' Association (CMA) calls "blackmail" on the part of vendors. He told SUNDAY in Bombay: "You have to remember that the vendors have made absolutely no investment—at one time we calculated that their annual profit on investment works out to over 740 per cent. Most of the vendors are selling the cigarettes at inflated rates and earning 1,500 per cent as profits in the process. And why are vendors in Bombay alone demanding larger commission? All over the country vendors get a standard 6 per cent commission".

It however appears that the movement will soon have the country in its grip. Unless a compromise is reached, in the near future smokers of all shades will face an acute cigarette famine. In Bombay, most middle class and lower middle class customers have already switched over to bidis.

S. N. M. ABDI and ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA, Bombay

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What was Emmanuel's crime?

A case of no clues



Emmanuel

ON the morning of March 29, Emmanuel Williams, 22, finished his bath, got ready and left his home for Mehta Export, the factory where he worked. On the way he stopped at a tea stall near his house at Moor Lines, Delhi Cantonment, to have a cup of tea. Even before he could get his cup of tea, he suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around and saw constable Vijay Pal Singh, standing next to him. Before he realised what was happening, he was whisked away to the Delhi Can-

tonment police station for interrogation. The reason: he was suspected to be involved in the kidnapping of a girl, Raj, who had been missing for the last two days. Raj, a 14-year-old girl, and daughter of Jaipal Singh, a gate keeper at Palam cinema worked as a maid servant in a nearby locality. On March 27, she went out for shopping but never returned. To this date her whereabouts are unknown. Anxious about what had happened to his daughter, Jaipal Singh went to the Delhi Cantonment police station and lodged a complaint. He, however, did not file an FIR until March 31, wherein he stated that he suspected that Emmanuel might be involved in the kidnapping of his daughter. Sometime back he had found a photograph of Emmanuel in the possession of Raj. Suspecting that they were having an affair, he had admonished her. Further, he said that on the day his daughter disappeared, some people had seen Emmanuel around the locality where he lived. In the meanwhile, according to D. F. Williams, Emmanuel's father, word had got around that the police had taken away his son. He waited throughout the day for him to come back home. When finally, till the evening he did not return, he went to the police station to inquire. There he found his son in police custody, sitting in a corner and weeping after being subjected to torture. A similar pattern developed in the

following days. Either on his way to work, or while returning from work, Emmanuel would be picked up by the police, interrogated and then released. Emmanuel would return home a broken boy and tell his father the torture he had gone through.

Helpless at what was happening, D. F. Williams, finally approached Mrs Vimal Nagi, an ex-Metropolitan Councillor and Member of the Contonment Board for help and advice. On April 8, Mrs Nagi, after hearing the story went to the police station and met the Station House Officer. She also saw Emmanuel in the police lock-up who, she said, on seeing her said: "The police will kill me, they won't leave me. Please help me get out of here". Once again, that night Emmanuel was released. But this did not stop his plight. Emmanuel's father said that every day the boy was taken for interrogation and he returned home in a bad condition. On April 11, too, Emmanuel was taken for interrogation by the police at around 4 in the evening. And the same day after a couple of hours, Emmanuel was found lying by the roadside about a 100 yards from his house, in an unconscious state, frothing at the mouth. Immediately, D. F. Williams's neighbours contacted him. He rushed to the spot and took his son to the cantonment general hospital. The doctors at the hospital referred the case to the Safdargunj hospital, where Emmanuel was admitted in the emergency ward. At no stage, despite the repeated beatings, could the police extract a statement from Emmanuel saying that he was involved in the kidnapping. For five days he battled for life, all the while unconscious and in a state of coma, unable to utter a word. On April 16, at 3.30 pm he died, without having issued any statement. Before his body was released, a post mortem was conducted.

That evening Emmanuel's body was brought to Moor Lines, to his home and was put in a coffin. By this time word of Emmanuel's death had spread and tempers got inflamed. Relatives, friends and neighbours who were aware of the police beating decided to take the body in a procession to the police station. With cries of "Khooni police hai, hai" (murderer police, shame, shame) and "Baccha mar diya, hai, hai" (they have killed a child, shame, shame), the procession proceeded to the police station. Most of those in the procession carried black flags and some had even draped themselves with black shawls. As the procession reached the police station and people refused to move, the SP and the ASP arrived. A. M. Das, the general secretary of the Air Force Civilian Workers Union, who was leading the procession along with Mrs Vimal Nagi, then explained the situation to the senior police officials, who assured them that the matter would be looked into. Finally, after a four-hour long dharna, and after the assurance had been given, the body was taken to the cantonment cemetery and Emmanuel's body was laid to rest in the presence of senior

The dead body of Emmanuel



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SISIR-22

Made in Polydor

Though no final medical report has been made out, according to the post-mortem report a greenish substance was found in Emmanuel's stomach and it is claimed that he died due to some unknown poisoning. But the real cause of the death will be announced after the examination of the viscera. The medical report also says that no signs of external injury were found on the body of Emmanuel. But it is common knowledge that police beating does not always leave marks on the body. And as a police officer admitted, "He was given beatings, but not third degree ones".

Secondly, there seems to be a contradiction as far as the number of occasions on which Emmanuel was interrogated is concerned. Though the police authorities should have a record of the exact number of times on which a person is interrogated the statement issued by them says: "Emmanuel was called for interrogation to the police station three or four times". Emmanuel's relatives and neighbours, however, say that he was called for interrogation virtually every day. The police are also singularly tight-lipped and defensive on this issue. "An inquiry is on and therefore we are in no position to say anything. It is only after the inquiry is over that the facts will emerge," said Dr K. K. Paul, SP, South Delhi. But the police maintain that they had no hand whatsoever in Emmanuel's death.

gation of the case" as a result of which two police personnel were suspended. The nature of the irregularities they refuse to reveal. The "irregularities" are being investigated by Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr Sewa Dass. Whatever may be the cause of Emmanuel's death, his father will now be without

SAUMITRA BANERJEE, Delhi :

Six years back when the Indian Government gave away a tiny unpopulated island of Kachatheevu situated in the Palk Strait to Sri Lanka, the fishermen of Rameshwaram were not really happy. The island which contains a small chapel of St. Anthony, where a big feast is held annually, was once the personal property of the Raja of Ramanad. Since Sri Lanka claimed it, Mrs. Gandhi who was keen on building up better relationships with the Sri Lanka Government handed over the island. But with certain conditions. The annual St. Anthony's festival was to go on, and pilgrims from India would not be asked to show passports or visas. Also, Sri Lanka and Indian fishermen would be allowed to fish in the "traditional" waters. This small condition which seemed so innocent then has become a bone of contention over the last years. The situation in Rameshwaram today is quite grim and thousands of Indian fishermen who fish around the island are living in constant fear. Franklin Rayon, one of the more articulate fishermen leaders told me that from "time immemorial" Indian fishermen have been fishing in waters beyond Kachatheevu. "The waters around Rameshwaram hardly produce any fish. So our fishermen used to go beyond Kachatheevu island, fish for the lucrative prawns, rest on the island for some time and then return to Sri Rameshwaram", he explained. "Sri Lanka fishermen don't really object to this, never mind the small quarrels and misunderstandings occurring now and then in the waters around Kachatheevu over good prawns."

Nearly 800 mechanised boats are engaged in the trade in Nambalwaram; a number of them are repatriates from Sri Lanka and had bought the boats through loans by Government agencies. "A number of boats have been lost in recent years due to the unpredictable cyclones and to snake attacks," he said. "We are the victims to the Lanka navy's greed," complained P. A. Fernando, Secretary of the Nambalwaram Fishermen's Association. It is believed that each boat catches 10 kg of prawns on an average; each kg of prawn can fetch Rs 80 to Rs 90 in the export market. "Sri Lanka naval authorities are playing a hide-and-grab game", continued Franklin Rayon. "Some days they don't turn up. And then suddenly they appear, and order our fishermen to follow them. Of course, the situation, today is not as bad as three or five years ago, when they used to take our fishermen to jail on the mainland and starve them for couple of days".

Leaders of the Rameshwaram fishermen told SUNDAY that when the going is good, prayers and other things worth Rs 500 lakh are offered every day. But not even the richest of them could afford to pay the taxes levied on the fish. The taxes were higher than the price of the fish, according to the fishermen. It is alleged that the government has been collecting the taxes for years and has not been paying them. The fishermen are now demanding that the government should pay the taxes and should also provide them with facilities for drying and storing the fish.

TOP producer thought he was being very wise when he wanted to sign Raakhee for a role in one of his overcrowded artistarrers. It was supposed to be a very "challenging" role and therefore the producer assumed that the star concerned would not demand a fabulous sum. The very name of the producer was supposed to make the star jump for the moon. But Raakhee is not just another star—she is an individual who thinks. When she quoted her price, the man acted in typical, rude fashion. He told her that if she didn't agree to their price (peanuts) they could take the next plane to get another star and she could jump for it at half their offer! He thought the threat would force Raakhee to accepting his offer. On the contrary, it put her off completely!

SPURRED on by her films' success, *Rekha* has become bold and innovative. Like she did this Madras film with *Kamalahasan* when she found out that another South Indian sex-bomb, *Kalpana Iyer* was slated for that role. Never before had *Rekha* gone out to ask for roles, leave alone, one in a film from Madras. And now she has gone one step further to prove to *Raakhee* that she can also wear white in her hair

Yogita: Kishore Kumar's loss. is Mithun's gain



Raakhee knows her price. Producers should know this

like *Raakhee* did in *Kabhi Kabhie* and *Tapasya*. Good for *Rekha*; at least she is concentrating on her work.

NOW that the *Kishore-Yogita* divorce has come through, will it be long before *Leena* officially begins living with *Kishore*? And will it mean *Mithun* and *Yogita* tying the knot legally? Hope that doesn't upset the scales because *Mithun* is a rising star and marriage might tilt the balance unfavourably for him. *Yogita*, who was showing a bit of promise after her *Kishore*-marriage-fiasco, may again slip down. Why can't such girls (like *Rekha* and *Parveen*) who need to be constantly in love with a man stay that way—they make a hash out of their marriage, by hurrying their spouses into it unwillingly and then making a hash out of their careers by concentrating on other things besides their work!

WHAT started as a helpless undertaking might well turn out a money-spinning venture: *Raakesh Roshan* was helping out a friend who wanted to make a film, and then the friend backed out. So *Raakesh* made *Aap ke Diwane* and if the advance reports are to be trusted, the film should do very well. ■



KHAAS BAAT

EVEN during the "wet" years of Karunanidhi's regime, Madras was never notorious for the kind of film parties which take place in Bombay. In sharp contrast, such parties and get-togethers have become common today; sycophant journalists are shepherded into a safe hotel and their fantasies are irrigated by alcohol. Of late, some actors and actresses too are throwing "wet" parties in their hotel suites. And a heroine with a musical name organised one such binge but some of the journalists were reportedly annoyed as she kept the best booze for her producers and served second grade alcohol to the Press.

IN one of his forthcoming films *Hitler Umanath*, actor Sivaji Ganesan is shown wearing a Hitler-like mask. That may be the only connection the film has with Hitler. Years ago, Sivaji produced a film entitled *Vietnam Veedu*, a terrible melodrama about a

house of perpetual conflicts. In one of the scenes from the script (which was also produced by Sivaji), he was heard saying: "My sons are never good to me but then why should I complain? After all even Gandhi's sons weren't faithful to him". Well, one of Gandhi's grandsons who's an IAS officer wrote a letter to Sivaji Ganesan correcting the observation. Sivaji promptly dropped the incorrect line from the script and didn't include it in the film too. Incidentally, of late, Sivaji is showing great aptitude for decorative titles. He has acted in *General Chakravarthy*, *Justice Gopinath*, *Pilot Premnath*, and now, *Hitler Umanath*. Suggested titles: *Stalin Muthuchamy*, *Marshal Tilo Manickam* and *Mountbatten Mannarsamy*. Please note, PIOUSJI holds the copyright for these titles.

NOW that Kamalahasan is accepting assignments in Hindi (he has three Hindi films on hand), it's high time some enterprising producer



Sripriya in a scene from "Nachitram"

Jayen and Gita: Forbidden fruit tastes sweeter



remade his Tamil super hit *Kalyana Raman*. As the dim-wit Kalyanam, Kamalahasan was superb and the film pulled crowds solely because of him.

Recently when Madras Doordarshan announced that *Kalyana Raman*, would be telecast, dozens of letters, mostly from students, requested the Doordarshan authorities not to telecast the film during the examination season. And some "miscreant" (was it a student?) even telephoned the Doordarshan Kendra and announced that four bombs had been planted inside the building. The film was telecast according to schedule. Scores of police personnel combed the sprawling Doordarshan Kendra and realised after four hours that it was only a hoax.

HOW can we have yet another hero called Mohan when Lakshmi's actor-husband Mohan is still in the field? The makers of *Nenjathai Killathay* feel that Lakshmi's Mohan may not stage a come-back in Tamil films at all (we hear he has a couple of Malayalam films), and people have

even forgotten his existence. As a matter of fact, he was never popular in Tamil films and hasn't acted in more than four Tamil films. And Mohan seems to be an intelligent and sensitive person. He avoids sticking to his wife's saree. When Lakshmi took up the direction of a Tamil-Kannada bilingual, she didn't even whisper her husband's name during the casting. When asked why she didn't do so, she quipped: "He just didn't suit that role".

SRIPRIYA's *Natchathiram* too has opened to full houses: if the initial enthusiasm is carried on, the film will help to prop up Sripriya's sagging popularity.

RAJINI SHARMA wants SUNDAY readers to know that she hasn't given up trying for Hindi films: She has a couple of assignments like *Salle Pe Salla* (the film has five heroes including Amitabh and live heroines). And though Tamil producers are paying more attention to her than Hindi ones, she believes her stars will soon shine in Bombay.

PIOUSJI

THE WORLD

Barely musical

The song had a very catchy beat, so it was not surprising that it shot to the top of the popularity charts all over the world. The group that called themselves *The Village People* had established themselves in the big league with the release of the song called "YMCA". Suddenly, everyone, from grandmothers to primary school kids, was humming the tune. Some branches of the YMCA even picked up the song and began using it for advertising purposes, but that was before someone discovered that the lyrics had homosexual overtones. *The Village People* were under a cloud for some time, but not their music. No sir, their music continued to go places. The group was later asked to do a film—Allan Carr's "Can't Stop The Music" and



the picture shows them with Valerie Perrine in a scene from the movie itself. Although you wouldn't think so, judging by their costumes, the film is being brought to theatres this summer with a 13.5 million price tag. Looks as if *The Village People* are baring up well to the demands of Hollywood.

Stiff upper Chunnel

The Chunnel (the British Channel Tunnel) is not yet dead. Around 1975, when the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson backed out of the Anglo-French project because of financial reasons, the French were rather annoyed. That was understandable, since the idea of the Chunnel has long enjoyed official support in France. Of late, however, under the Prime Ministership of Mrs Thatcher, the project has received a shot in the arm. As regards Government involvement in the project, the French national railway, SNCF, is directly linked and in fact totally committed. However, there are others in the French private sector who have impressed the Conservative Government with their proposal for private financing of construction. One such company is Spie-Batignolles, one of the founder members of the European Channel Tunnel Group. The company has approached the French Government about the project but the Government is silent.

No wonder then, that Frenchmen say: "But it is not the French you must ask about the tunnel—we have always wanted it. It is the British who must decide".

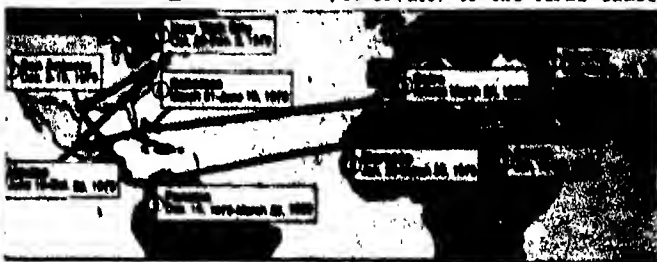
Hair today, gone tomorrow

Two hundred of the best-groomed heads in England gathered in Eastbourne for the annual conference of the National Hairdressers' Federation. And what did they confer about? Oh, well, the kind of attitude that drives people to use boot polish on their hair, for instance. In addition, they were told to modernise their views and be nice to young people, no matter what their idiosyncracies were. Mr David Colclough, president of the body, told his members that it was not their business to moralise on their clients. He insisted that they should open their minds—and doors—to all people, no matter how outlandish they looked. Punks for instance.

Running—not a country

The Shah has done quite a bit of travelling lately, although it would seem that he has finally found a place of sanctuary. From Teheran, which city he left on January 16, 1979, he went to Aswan and from there to Morocco. From Morocco it was a long hike all the way to the Bahamas and then to Mexico. He was in New York from October 22 to December 2, 1979 and in San Antonio for two weeks in December following which he celebrated Christmas in Panama. He

arrived in Cairo on March 14 this year, where Sadat was determined to show his gratitude to the Shah for the help that the former Iranian monarch extended to Egypt in the face of a boycott by Arab nations following the Camp David peace agreement with Israel. There has been a furore over the Shah's arrival in Cairo and the warm welcome extended by Sadat, has increased pressure on the Egyptian President to redouble his demonstration of loyalty to the Arab cause.



Programmed action

Computers are the "favoured tools of people who dominate. They serve to exploit, to document, to control and to punish. Tomorrow telematic techniques will inaugurate 1984", said the Committee To Liquidate Or Neutralise Computers (CLNC) in a letter to the newspaper, *Liberation*. The Committee members, "technicians in the computer field, well placed to appreciate its dangers to society", have lived up to their name and their professed ideals. In early April they set up the computer works of Philips Data Systems at Toulouse, near Paris. And to clinch their objectives the group removed programmed tapes containing material "destined for use by French forces and secret services", which loss Philips has denied. The company, however, need not have worried about losing business, thanks to the CLNC group which is also known as Direct Action. The urban guerrilla group members destroyed programmed tapes of their rival company — CII-Honeywell-Bull.

And the French Government? They are not bothered about any direct action. In spite of the attacks the Cabinet has decided to expand the existing memory banks for industrial, official and public use. As far as the CLNC is concerned, that's more fuel for their fires.

Who's right?

Ballet dancers of the Rome Opera House staged a wildcat strike on April 10, only hours before the opera *Giselle* was scheduled to open. *Giselle* starred two big names Rudolf Nureyev and Carla Fracci. The stars, unused to this sort of treatment, declared that they would dance irrespective of what the Rome Opera House dancers did. Backstage, Nureyev told the striking dancers, "In a true democracy the right to strike is sacred but so is the right to work". Not surprisingly, then, as he went to work, the 32 male and female dancers walked on to the stage to read a statement about their strike.

Save my Teddy



Pope John Paul II has been known to do a lot of things: hug babies, watch circus clowns perform, write poems and even see his own play being enacted at the Vatican. Recently he was asked to perform a rather extraordinary miracle. At Rome's Fiumicino Airport, 36-year-old James Leo Connor from Philadelphia paced up and down wearing a sandwichboard with a message imploring the Holy Father to help Senator Edward Kennedy win the Pennsylvania primary. And the Senator did win!

(en)Lighten your pockets

Where is the World Government of the Age of Enlightenment? It is in Buckinghamshire, in the stately ancestral home—Mentmore Towers—of Lord Rosebery. And there are Ministers, too. There is the Minister of Information and Inspiration and a Minister of All Possibility. The function of the World Government is to take those who have been unable to find mental peace on a "journey towards creative intelligence." The Ministers try to explain how mental peace can be achieved through transcendental meditation. Most of those who visit Mentmore Towers have tried drugs and hormones, the whole works. In desperation they each spent a pound for a day of "enlightenment". But what they received was nothing.

Dogged resistance

This is one dog who has earned his salary many times over. Rats, the British army cross-bred Corgi terrier, was honourably discharged from the Services after a vet found that his health was going to the dogs. More than being physically ill, Rats has been mentally shaken. Reason: for the past couple of years he was based in Crossmaglen in Northern Ireland, and while accompanying his human colleagues on patrol, he braved the occasional bombs. He has also been injured by something called a "car bomb" and been burnt by a petrol bomb. In fact, he still has four pieces of car metal in his body from the first mishap, when he also received head and leg injuries. In addition, he has been presented with a gold medal for devotion to duty. The Prince of Wales Company of the First Battalion Welsh Guards, with whom he did his last stint of duty, gave him a fitting farewell. Since Rats loves Army helicopters, they flew him to his place of retirement in one. His place of retirement, incidentally, is a secret since Irish terrorists have a price on Rats' head. It's a dog's life indeed!

Bitter Pill for husbands

If you have been deprived of something, revolt. That's precisely what the wives of European Economic Community bureaucrats in Luxembourg did. Their demand was that their husbands—based in Strasbourg—return permanently. The European Parliament is now in Strasbourg while a new £1,200 million building has been built to house it permanently in Luxembourg. Parliament staffers, who number about 800, have to commute to and fro for one week every month along with tons of documents from Luxembourg to Strasbourg.

Wives and husbands tolerated this shifting tempora-

rily because they had been told that the Parliament would shift to Luxembourg permanently this year. That never happened since the department which controls the Parliament's working life passed by seven votes to four the decision to remain in Strasbourg. The lonely wives have already signed a petition to be handed over to the Chairman of the EEC Mr Roy Jenkins, to shift the headquarters permanently to Luxembourg. There is a standing joke about the Luxembourg wives: that they do not have to resort to the Pill because their husbands are hardly ever at home.

Them planes don't fly no more



American military planes don't fly. The US Air Force's F-15 and F-16 and the Navy's F-14 and F-18 are having serious technical complications. These planes have engines that wear out too fast, stall in manoeuvres or even explode in mid-air. If they are to be kept in combat readiness their defects have to be set right, so the Pentagon is diverting urgent

defence funds to keep these four aircraft types flying. Costs are also rising. A single F-18 costs around 17.4 million dollars. Once the planes are in the air they can outfly or outshoot anything that flies today, according to the Pentagon. But till the technical problems are ironed out the USA is in a losing race against other super powers.

Body beautiful



Whoever heard of women flexing their muscles? Well in the beginning of April there was a body building Championship in Atlantic City, USA, where 33 contestants not only showed their well-formed muscles but also their bodies. The judges agreed on the choice of 24-year-old Rachel McLish of Harleton, Texas as the winner. There goes one more sacred preserve of men!

Economy drive

"The most massive and profound industrial revolution in peacetime history" is about to take place in the shape of what the American Press terms "world cars", said Ford Motor Company chairman, Philip Caldwell. They will be smaller, will consume a lot less fuel than other American cars and will also be marketed internationally. These models, the Ford Escort and Mercury Lynx, will have components from 12 different countries, will be assembled in the USA and Europe and sold almost anywhere in the world. General Motors another big name in the car industry will make its first "world car" in 1981, while American Motors and their French partner Renault will join hands to produce a similar car in 1982.

LIVING

Jurisprudence

Goa's most eligible bachelor, the young and debonair Law Minister Dayanand Narvekar, a busy lawyer until he took to politics, has a serious problem on his plate. Four women employees of the Judicial Commissioner's Court have complained to him that fornication within the court premises is not at all unique. Narvekar, whose good looks have set many a pretty heart aflutter, did not remain insensitive to the occupational hazards of the young damsels and ordered an immediate police investigation. However, the acting Inspector General of Police, Prabhakar Sinari bowed out on the plea that the conclusions would in no way enhance the reputation or prestige of the judiciary. By way of a gentle reminder, Mario Cabral e Sa points out that about a year ago, PWD plumbers were summoned to unclog the drains of the court's privies. There was a great deal of ribaldry when they emerged with over 150 used rubber condoms, but discretion being the better



part of valour, no one enquired into the mystery. Meanwhile, having failed by way of the police, Narvekar referred the matter to the Central Government and received the answer that the judiciary was to appoint its own vigilance officers. But then again, that doesn't solve many problems. Narvekar is already ordering an investigation into the case of a young female typist who, lacking legal qualifications, is about to be appointed a judge.

Picking up the tempo

Neither of them saw the "No Entry" sign at the crossing of Royd Street and Free School Street, Calcutta. The driver of the three-wheel tempo swung his vehicle across the corner and the motorcyclist, close on his heels, did likewise. The shrill sound of a police whistle rent the surroundings and the two lawbreakers were flagged down by an indignant traffic constable. All of a sudden there was the sound of an engine being gunned and it became clear to all around that the tempo driver was taking the opportunity to make a quick getaway. The constable swiftly ordered the motorcyclist to start

up and chase the errant tempo. The ensuing race did not last long as the motorcycle soon overtook the tempo and the policeman—who was riding pillion—was able to flag it down once more, this time for keeps. The chastened tempo driver had to contend with a very irate policeman, while the motorcyclist waited nervously to see what was going to become of him. After it was all over, the constable walked up to the motorcyclist. "And you", he announced grandly "are free to go since you helped me." And to prove his gratitude, he erased the motorcyclist's number from his book.

All's fine

What is the maximum fine (under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act) if one causes injury or death to an animal? Be it a horse or a squirrel, the penalty is Rs 50. Despite this, the Madras branch of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals has filed a case against the producer of a Tamil film, *Kali*. It was during the shooting of this movie that ten horses were recently injured in a fire. Since there was no fire service unit in attendance and it took more than eight hours to admit the horses to the veterinary hospital, two died.

Please God, how about a few goals?

If you don't have a god, worship an idol. But what if you don't even have an idol to worship? In Calcutta, reports Arijit Sen, the answer is simple. Find yourself a goalpost, get yourself a pundit and then kneel down and pray. Each year, the first day of Baisakh (Bengali New Year), brings football officials, players and fans in their thousands to the maidan, the scene of many an epic soccer battle. At most of the big soccer clubs, a goalpost is put up amidst a great deal of pomp and ceremony and at the hour appointed by the Hindu almanac, a pundit invokes the blessings of the almighty. One has never been able to understand the invocation but it is obviously directed towards the dual blessings of saving and scoring goals, to the satisfaction of the club in question.

The origins of this ritual date back to the days when trophies became more important than anything else. The recruitment of top players is also backed up by



bringing the game within the ambit of the Kali temples of the city of Calcutta—and the pundits, of course. However, the gods have never been able to keep everyone happy at the same time. This year, April 14 saw thousands brave the scorching heat to gather on the Mohun Bagan and East Bengal

grounds. But, while East Bengal's prayers ended at 9 am, Mohun Bagan's began one hour later. The intervening period was utilised by the supporters of both clubs to exchange brickbats from the ramparts, during which 30 teenagers were injured. Talk about religious militance.

Tenants' penance

The things some people think of! Madras must be the only metropolitan city in India where homeowners advertise their preference for prospective Brahmin tenants.

There is the case of an ultra-conservative Brahmin homeowner in Santhome who is trying to throw out his tenant—who is also a Brahmin—because he doesn't much care for the latter's fondness for fish.

And he is not the only one having problems. Arthur Pais recently underwent a rather strange experience while househunting with his fiancée. When he saw a house that he liked, he naturally decided to discuss the rent. But he received a shock instead when the owner told him discreetly, "We are pious Catholics and we don't like the idea of giving out our house to people who roam around together even before they are married. For that matter, how can we be sure that you'll ever get married?"

The Hit King

"You want to know what's the safest business in films? You put up a large, impressive set for your film, and once your film is completed, start renting it out to producers who are making films in languages other than your own," says D. Rama Naidu, one of the shrewdest and most successful producers down South. Naidu has half a dozen Telugu hits to his credit, and is now putting finishing touches to his ambitious Hindi venture *Bandish* starring Rajesh, Hema, Danny and Tanuja. Earlier he produced such bumper hits as *Prem Nagar*, *Dildaar* and *Dil Aur Deewar*. "I signed Rajesh and Hema much before Rajesh staged a comeback through *Amar Deep*, and Hema was already receiving bad publicity, thanks to a couple of films but then I sell my films on the basis of the story and both Rajesh and Hema did good work for my *Prem Nagar*," Rama Naidu told Arthur Pais.



His next venture, a remake of one of the hits in Telugu star Jeetendra, and of course Rajesh Khanna. Naidu recently opened a very useful, comfortable dubbing theatre in Madras. Mr B. Nagi Reddy, himself a very successful producer and studio-boss (Vauhini in Madras) was among the first few invitees to bless the new venture. Reddy was "patron saint" Naidu when the latter forayed into films.

All at sea



First he had his hands and feet bound with metal chains. Then Nathubhai Pahade, aged 54, slipped from the boat that was carrying him into the waters of the Jamuna. A motley crowd of

about 100 people cheered exuberantly as he did so and then waited in anticipation to see how long it would take the swimmer to reappear. It took a few seconds, but his head soon bobbed

above the surface and the people cheered again, this time slightly louder than before. Pahade kept afloat for half an hour before he made his way to the shallow waters and was picked up by the boat to be brought back to shore. The intrepid swimmer was unchained by Vidyaben Shah, president of the Gujarat Samaj and, free of his shackles, he waved gleefully to all those who stood around.

Said Pahade, "I have swum the seven seas but I have not kept this honour for myself. It is for the youth of today and the children of tomorrow". And, Saumitra Banerjee adds, he has literally swum the seven seas, all within the period of just one month. However, Nathubhai Pahade is not just a swimmer; he was involved in the Independence movement and during the 1942 Quit India movement, was sentenced to eight months RI by the British. Incidentally, he is a dancer as well and has been performing Kathakali and Bharat Natyam for many years. He bases his style of swimming, with his hands and feet bound, on *Pranayam*, a yogic exercise and says it was his desire to do something different that prompted him to take up this challenge.

Film feast '80

A little boy tugs your sleeve and says "Two for six" Translated, that means he is offering you cinema tickets at three times their genuine price of Rs two. This actually happened to Paranjoy Guha Thakurta before the screening of an unsold print of G. Aravindan's award-winning film *Thampu* during the Calcutta Film Festival '80. Incidentally, this was the first-ever Indian film festival of its kind organised by a state Government.

Between April 11 and 17, four of the city's premier cinema halls in the New Market area screened about 60 films including ten Ray evergreens and some old Bengali films, many of them obtained from the Pune archives. With most of the non-Bengali films (there were over two dozen in Telugu, Malayalee, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi and Oriya) being subtitled and with tickets going at nominal prices, filmgoers in Calcutta responded enthusiastically. With a bonus Bengali New Year holiday thrown in, most of the four daily shows ran to packed houses. And though many tried to prove otherwise, certainly a good time was had by all.

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Beginning May 4

This week the Sun and Mercury are in Aries, Venus is in Gemini, and Jupiter, Saturn, Mars and Rahu are conjoined in Leo. Uranus and Neptune are in Scorpio, and Kethu alone is in Aquarius. The Moon will be moving through Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces from Sagittarius.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) There is threat of a sudden change on your business or professional front. If the threat materialises, a change for the better will result. The rest of this week will bring a lot of domestic joy. Your business affairs will prosper and you will make fantastic headway. This week favours love and marriage. You are advised to check all extravagant tendencies. Good dates: 6, 7, 8 and 10. Lucky numbers: 4, 2 and 8. Favourable direction: North-west.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) A valuable new friendship may develop this week. Be content with slow (but sure) progress and meet inevitable delays and obstacles with patience and tact. Occult advice may prove very helpful at this juncture. Exercise care and discretion in your dealings with friends of the opposite sex. Devote a little extra attention to business details and some good fortune will be yours. Good dates: 5, 7, 9 and 10. Lucky numbers: 3, 6, and 9. Favourable direction: South.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) This will be a week of mixed fortunes. Pay great attention to your financial and professional affairs. Hard work, your own hunches and elders benefit you. A property deal will be clinched in your favour. Many will win promotions through clever hunches. Some unreasonable opposition on the part of an old person of the opposite sex is to be expected. Good dates: 4, 5, 7 and 9. Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 8. Favourable direction: North.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) A fair measure of success and good fortune is indicated. Speculation is likely to pay. Your prospects have now completely changed for the better. You will be helped by high officials and a promotion is probable. Letters from distant places will bring good news. Your domestic front will remain a source of joy and happiness. Check all extravagant tendencies. Revive old contacts to suit your ends. Good dates: 6, 7 and 9. Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8. Favourable direction: North.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) A busy week lies ahead of you. Make the best of existing favourable influences. More than average success is predicted for most people. In many cases, promotion will result from hard work and application. On the social front, things look slightly complicated. Accept all reasonable risks and forge ahead on all fronts. Wait for letters before taking an important decision. Good dates: 4, 6, 7 and 9. Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 9. Favourable direction: East.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) Exercise caution and restraint in your professional and personal life. Take nothing for granted. Keep away from gambling, betting and speculative ventures. On the whole this week should prove moderately lucky. A journey may have to be postponed. Domestic problems will be solved at the weekend. A friend of the opposite sex may give you cause for worry. Good dates: 6, 7, 9 and 10. Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 10. Favourable direction: West.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) A week of mixed fortunes is predicted for you. A sudden change of fortune will strengthen your position and your success will be praised by all your friends and relatives. A new friendship will brighten your prospects. A promotion is probable. You will gain in business by using original methods. Your domestic life will not pose many problems. Legal problems should be promptly handled. Good dates: 4, 6, 9 and 10. Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 9. Favourable directions: East and North.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) This week begins on a happy and joyful note. A happy romance is forecast. You will gain in speculative ventures. You are, however, advised not to take needless risks. This week is particularly favourable for business expansion and speculative investment. Letters will bring good news. You are advised to check all extravagant tendencies. Good dates: 4, 5, 7 and 9. Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 2. Favourable direction: South-east.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23 — December 22) A modicum of success and happiness is predicted, especially if extravagance, law suits and heavy expenditure are avoided. Influential relatives and friends, especially womanfolk, will prove helpful. Your home front will remain lively and joyful. Be discreet in speech, correspondence and actions. You are likely to meet an old friend of the opposite sex. Good dates: 4, 5 and 8. Lucky numbers: 3, 2 and 9. Favourable direction: West.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) One of the most important and exciting weeks in recent times lies ahead of you. Expected and unexpected good fortune is predicted. Your domestic front will present a happy picture. Valuable new friendships are foreseen. Unexpected medical expenditure is predicted. Borrowing or lending money may lead to unnecessary problems. Good dates: 5, 6, 8 and 9. Lucky numbers: 7, 2 and 9. Favourable direction: North-west.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) This week will prove difficult and trying. Safeguard your health and that of your womanfolk. You will benefit in diverse expected and unexpected ways. A promotion is on the cards. Guard against physical and mental overstrain. Be discreet in speech, correspondence and actions. Marriage, changes and travel should be postponed. Good dates: 6, 9 and 10. Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 10. Favourable direction: West.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) Your power of reasoning and keen perception should enable you to successfully circumvent treachery and evil machinations, particularly in business. Watch finances carefully and do not speculate. Intellectual activities are well signified. Make hay while the sun shines. Exercise care and prudence where documents are concerned. Good dates: 4, 5, 7 and 9. Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4. Favourable directions: West and East.

M. B. RAMAN

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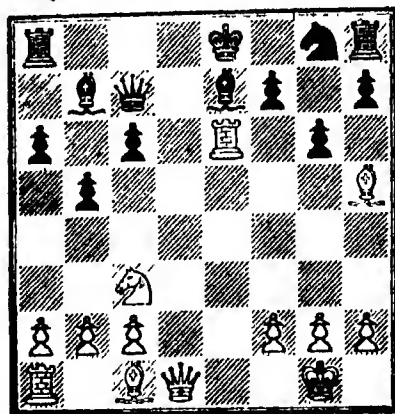


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chess

Polugaevsky (Black)



Kasparov (White) to move
Position after Black's 13th move

A new Fischer?

IN THE PAST year a 16-year-old Russian has been making an impact on the world scene unknown since the early days of Bobby Fischer. His name? Well, there seems to be some confusion over this point. Although he is known to the world as Garry Kasparov, I am reliably informed that he is known to his father as Garry Weinstein. This seems a curious anomaly, especially in a country which does not go in for stage names.

Whatever alias he may decide to adopt, Garry Kasparov/Weinstein's play and results bear the unmistakable stamp of true genius. He first sprang to light in last year's Soviet Championship, which having qualified for the final, itself a remarkable feat for a then 15-year-old, he made a sensational start and was actually leading after six rounds. Naturally such a pace could not be sustained by one so young, but his final score of 50 per cent in such company would be highly creditable for an established grandmaster of twice his age. To prove this success to be no mere flash in the pan, the Soviet Chess Federation sent him to play in the international tournament in Banja Luka in Yugoslavia last spring. Not only did he win first place, but he came through unbeaten, 2 points clear of a field including Andersson, Smejkal and Petrosian. Not a bad baptism into international chess.

Without doubt Kasparov and Weinstein are destined to become champions of the world. Here is a game which is already famous as their first win against a World Championship contender.

White: G. Kasparov. Black: L. Polugaevsky. USSR Championship Final 1978. Sicilian Defence.

1. P-K4, P-QB4; 2. N-KB3, P-K3; 3. P-Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, P-QB3; 5. N-QB3, Q-B2; 6. B-K2, P-QN4; 7. B-B3, B-N2; 8. O-O, N-QB3; 9. N x N, P x N; This position is known to theory as being very comfortable for Black, but Kasparov immediately sets the game alight with a hitherto unknown pawn sacrifice.

10. P-K5! Q x P; 11. R-K1, Q-B2; 12. B-R5! B-K2; Not 12... P-N3? 13. Q-Q4!

13. R x P, P-N3 (DIAGRAM) Apparently a total refutation of White's play.

14. R-K1! So simple. If 14... P x B then 15. Q-Q4, P-B3; 16. Q-Q1! followed by Q x P+ keeps the attack very much alive. An extraordinary conception.

34... R-Q3; 15. Q-B3, P-QB4; 16. B-B4! Q-N3; 17. Q-N3, P x B; 18. B-B7 N-N4; 19. Q-N7? Q-N3!

18... Q-N3; 19. B x R, Q x Q; 20. RP x Q, K x B; It is the ensuing phase of the game I find so impressive. A rook is usually no match for two bishops in the endgame, but Kasparov manages to establish an unshakable grip on the position, despite the reduced material.

21. QR-Q1; K-B2; 22. N-Q5; B x N; 23. R x B, P-KR3; A rather pathetic attempt to develop his rook, but what else can he do? 24. R x RP, R-R2; 25. R(5)-K5, K-Q2; 26. R(5)-K3, R-N2; 27. R-Q3; K-B3; 28. R-R3, R-N3; 29. R-KB3! Stronger than 29. R x P+ K-Q4 when the black king becomes active.

29... B-B3; 30. P-B3, K-Q2; 31. R-Q3; K-B2; 32. R-K8, N-K2; 33. R(8)-Q8, N-B3; 34. R(8)-Q7; K-N3; 35. R x P, B-K2; 36. R-K3, B-Q3; 37. P-B4, P-B5; 38. K-R2, B-B4; 39. R-K2, P-N5; 40. R-K4, P x P; 41. P x P, B-B7; 42. R x P, B x P; 43. K-R3, B-K8; 44. P-R4, N-R4? He had to try 44... R-N6; 45. K-R2, R x BP, 46. R x R, B x R, though after 47. R-KR7 White's kingside pawns would certainly decide the issue in his favour.

45. R-N4+ K-B4, 46. R-B5+ Resigns. The knight is lost.

Footnote: Black did not manage to move his king's knight until move 32! Can this be a record?

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

ONE of the surprises of the European Championship was the uneven form of the Swedish team that had won so impressively in Denmark two years ago. On this deal from an early match against Israel they were badly off course at both tables.

Dealer, North E-W vulnerable			
♠ A Q 9 6			
♥ Q J 8 7			
♦ 5			
♣ A K J 7			
♠ —	N	♠ 7 3 2	
♥ K 6	W E	♥ A 10 9 5 4 2	
♦ Q 10 9 8 6 3	S	♦ —	
♣ Q 9 8 6 4		♣ 10 5 3 2	
	♠ K J 10 8 5 4		
	♥ 3		
	♦ A K J 7 4 2		
	♣ —		

The Swedish North-South pair seemed to charge at the grand slam.

SOUTH	NORTH
—	1♠ (1)
1NT (2)	2♠
3♦ (3)	3♠
5NT (4)	7♠
No	

(1) Conventional, 17+.
(2) Positive and showing at least five spades.

(3) Diamond suit and 3 to 4 controls.
(4) Apparently a grand slam force, asking partner to bid seven with two top honours in spades.

East led the Ace of hearts, so the Swedes soon knew their fate. The Israeli bidding was much better co-ordinated.

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	2♦ (1)	No
2NT	No	3♦ (2)	No
3♠	No	4♠	No
4♦	No	4♠	No
4NT	No	5♥	dble
6♠	No	No	dble (3)
No	No	No	

(1) Roman Two Diamonds, indicating a strong 3-suiter.

(2) Showing that the short suit was diamonds.

(3) Presumably a Lightner double, correcting the previous request to lead a heart.

Holding the King of hearts, West nevertheless opened ♥K, on which East dropped the 10. The Vu-graph audience naturally thought a diamond would follow and that the Swedish pair in the closed room would be relieved to find they had gained on the board. But West, seemingly without reflection, led a club at trick two, so the slam was made. No doubt it was difficult for him to picture the dealer with a concealed six-card suit. Possibly, too, the 10 of hearts was not the right card in their signalling system.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



EVEN BEFORE the first stamps, the Penny Blacks, were issued in 1840, the Treasury was obsessed with the fear that unscrupulous people would wash or bleach the postmarks from used stamps in order to re-use them. The printers, Perkins, Bacon and Co. and Thomas De La Rue Ltd., conducted interminable experiments to develop an indelible postmark and a fugitive printing-ink. One result of these researches was the issue in January 1880 of this unexciting penny stamp known to collectors as the Venetian Red. The stamp is still very common if postmarked.



A NORTH SEA oil drilling production platform, Statoil A, is featured on one of three new Norwegian stamps devoted to modern engineering projects in Norway. Another new Norwegian issue is a miniature sheet containing four stamps which show aircraft used in polar exploration. This is intended to publicise Norwex 80, the international philatelic exhibition to be held in Oslo in June. London will also be staging an international exhibition at Earl's Court in May and the Post Office plans to issue a miniature sheet to mark the occasion. Other British issues during 1980 will illustrate Britain's contribution to the world of music and will commemorate the centenaries of the Amateur Athletic Association and the Welsh Rugby Union.

C. W. HILL



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UJJAIN : The sale of country liquor has increased manifold here thanks to Kal Bhairav the drinking deity, whose temple across the Kshipra River is a centre of attraction for Kumbh pilgrims. According to temple priest Sunderlal, more than 500 devotees are visiting the temple every day as compared to some 30 to 40 on other days. He expected the number to swell from April 13, the second auspicious bathing day of the Kumbh. Normally, the 'prasad'—in this case liquor—is offered to deity in the morning and in the evening, but these days it is being offered about a dozen times on request from the visitors—*United News of India* (Y. Ramakrishnan, Madurai)

SHAHABAD : Just for a cup of coffee, the Super Fast Bombay-bound Miner Express was detained for over an hour at Wadi junction. A passenger of the train, who took a cup of coffee, found the quantity was less and cold. He manhandled the vendor and that created the trouble. The Railway Police who appeared on the scene, were pushed out by the irate passenger. Then the sub-inspector was forced to bring down the passenger, who was a militaryman, seized his movement order and identity card. After taking his written statement, he was allowed to move. A report has been sent to his military unit for disciplinary action—*Indian Express* (K. S. Soma Sunder, Bangalore)

NEW DELHI : There was panic as patrol cars dashed to the Bank of Maharashtra in the Dholpur House on Shahjahan Road on April 1 and armed guards took up positions. The bank had received an anonymous telephone call that it was going to be raided. The petrified bank officials immediately informed the police who swung into action. It was only later, when the police control room had received several bogus calls during the day, that the officials realised that these were the usual April Fools Day pranks—*The Times of India* (Satyajit Chakraverty, Shillong)

PANAJI : The body of a three-year-old boy was practically eaten up by ants in the Hospicio hospital morgue—mat Margao. The Speaker of the Goa Assembly, Mr Froilano Machado, said he had himself seen the child's body as the parents were from his constituency of Cortalim. Mr Herculano Dourado (Congress-I) had moved a call for attention motion on the death of the boy, Rehman Agha, who was admitted to the hospital on April 8 after an accident and died there. The Health Minister, Sheikh Hassan denied that the death was due to negligence. He said he was not aware whether the body, as alleged by Mr Dourado, had been eaten by ants. At this stage, the Speaker intervened and confirmed the charge—*The Statesman* (Kajal Chakraborty, Calcutta)

UJJAIN : Mr Arjun Singh Dharu, leader of the Lok Dal group in the dissolved Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha and a former state parliamentary secretary, has rejoined as sub-inspector of police. The Ujjain district superintendent of police, Mr D. D. Gupta, told UNI that Mr Dharu, after reporting for duty, had gone on five days' leave. He will be posted at some police station in Ujjain district, the superintendent said. Mr Dharu had been missed from service on the charge of corruption but the high court subsequently ordered his reinstatement. By that time, Mr Dharu had won the 1977 assembly election and become a parliamentary secretary. According to official sources, Mr Dharu's return to police service entitles him to a large amount of compensation and salary arrears—*The Times of India* (Santha Ramachandran, New Delhi)

NEW DELHI : Two constables of the Delhi Armed Police — Rampal and Rishipal—have been arrested for allegedly trying to sell one of the two cars stolen from Gurgaon a few days ago, according to the police. It is stated that the two cars were found abandoned in Delhi on Monday (March 24). According to the police the constables tried to sell one of the cars (RJA 7787) to someone in the Jama Masjid area—*The Statesman* (M. P. Gupta, Ranchi)

UJJAIN : It is not all simple living at the Kumbh Mela here. The tents and shamianas of some of the leading sadhus now here to attend the mela are equipped with fans, coolers, refrigerators and telephones. Of course some of them still prefer 'Khas Tattis' to keep them cool, with their 'chelas' frequently sprinkling these with water. 35 telephones have already been provided to leading sadhus and the telephone authorities are receiving requests daily for more and more connections—*Nagpur Times* (A. B. Vishwakarma, Amravati)

I HAVE two leaders (Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi) and as long as I have their support, I will continue to be the Chief Minister here. We all belong to the *Indira Krupa Poshaka Nataka Mandali* (Indira-blessed drama troupe)—Gundu Rao, Karnataka Chief Minister—quoted in *Deccan Herald*

I DO not need to impress Sanjay Gandhi and that too by shouting in a Lok Sabha—Jagdish Tytler, Congress (I) MP, quoted in *Onlooker*

WE cannot afford to have leaders who want to stick on to their seats till they die—Dharam Veer, Uttar Pradesh Congress (I) president

EVERYONE claims to speak for the people even if his Party has won a paltry five or seven seats. I speak for the people, because I belong to a Party that has won over 350 seats. I say "Janata" is me—Giani Zail Singh

THE police have once again gone crazy—*Frontier* on the police brutality near Islampur in West Bengal

RAM is dead while Hanuman is alive—and kicking—Raj Narain, quoted in *Indian Express*

THE United States is a monstrous leech, sucking the blood of mankind; the Soviet Union is the burial ground of so many people; in France, housewives become part time whores to buy furniture; Israel is a nest of vipers; Saudi Arabia is an inferno of harems; and China stands on naked force—Bani Sadr, President of Iran, quoted in *Current*

WHAT do I buy with 200 million dollars? The hostility of the Soviet Union, and that does not suit me—General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan in *Time*

WHENEVER they (the Press) didn't know what I had bowled they would say it was a googly—B. S. Chandrasekhar, ex-Test cricketer, quoted in *Sportsworld*

I DON'T think there is ever a stage where you can say you are a writer. If you get too big for your boots, you can always read a page of Tolstoy and you'll be humbled—Ved Mehta, quoted in *Asiaweek*

THE most dangerous profession in India today is being a company director—Aditya Birla in *India Today*

THEY (westerners) would come to my recitals high on dope and would smoke pot and make love while I played—Ravi Shankar, sitar maestro

CENTRE OF ATTENTION

THE Pradesh Election Committees (PECs) of the Congress (I) met on April 18 to finalise the Assembly ticket lists in the nine states. Overheard in Delhi Congress (I) circles on April 17 :

Q : What will the PECs do?
A : They will compete with each other to go to 1, Safdarjung Road to tell Mrs Gandhi that they left the decision to her? The PECs have been so constituted that no unanimous decision can possibly emerge. The possibility of a decision by a majority vote is remote. Therefore, many Congress (I) men in the capital feel that the ultimate choice will have to be left to the Central leadership. As an example, they point out the composition of the Punjab PEC, which has 13 members. Eight of them are shared equally by the two main rival groups led by Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh. Two belong to Chaudhury Balram's group and the remaining three to Swaran Singh's camp. The balancing factor will be Swaran Singh and in all probability the indecisiveness of the Punjab PEC will land the list in the hands of the Centre.

THE BARODA MUDDLE CASE

"BARODA" has become an important name in Delhi. While on the one hand the Supreme Court was busy hearing a petition seeking the reopening of the Baroda Dynamite Case, Lalwani of Baroda stepped in with the "Baroda Kulfie Case". Interestingly, the lawyers in both cases have the same surname. While Ram Panjwani is trying to persuade the Supreme Court to reopen the Baroda Dynamite Case, R. L. Panjwani appeared for Lalwani in the assault case. R. L. Panjwani is lesser known so the publication of court reports caused some embarrassment to Ram Panjwani, who is a ruling Party lawyer.

IDENTITY CRISIS

SHRI BRAHMA MAHENDRA. General Secretary, Punjab Pradesh Congress (I) Committee, is allegedly involved in the Poorima Singh episode. Mr Bhupesh Gupta, CPI leader of the house, stated the episode in the Rajya Sabha on Monday,

March 31. All Delhi and Punjab papers — the language papers included — carried the news on April 1. Brahma Mahendra did not issue any contradiction till the evening of April 2. He issued a statement after consulting Mr Bhagwan Singh Siddhu, President of the Patiala Rural DCC (I) and also a leading criminal lawyer of Patiala who has vouched for Mahendra. Sanjay Gandhi has also criticised the CPI leader, Mr Gupta, at a public meeting in Patiala for making remarks in the Rajya Sabha.

Who is Brahma Mahendra? He belongs to Patiala and is the son of an income-tax practitioner. His age is about 35. Stays in Modi Building, near Anardana Chowk, Patiala. He was never a functionary of the Congress (I) or Youth Congress (I) till he suddenly became — thanks to Mr Kamal Nath — Secretary of the Patiala PCC (I) in 1979. He was a hangeron and closely associated with Kamal Nath, Devinder Singh

Garcha, MPs, and others. For the last five years or more, he was always in Delhi, very often in the Western Court, sometimes even forging MPs' signatures. His stay, generally in Room 54 can be verified from the Western Court reception.

What was he doing in Delhi? Did he have any ostensible means of livelihood? Was he doing any political work or other activity? No. Was he involved in a stabbing incident (over an attempted misbehaviour with some girls)? The case was registered and he was in Rajendra Hospital, Patiala, for over a month. He was in Delhi trying to arrange Sanjay Gandhi's Patiala programme and, on the night of the incident, he was with Devinder Singh Garcha and Mr Balbir Singh. Brahma Mahendra also used to frequent the temporary residence of Garcha at D11/67, Shahjahan Road Flats which is in the name of Chawla, a journalist working as a stringer for the *Indian Express*.

TITLED

THE man to watch in Delhi is Jagdish Tytler. He is now sitting officially in the PM's house every morning and evening, handling the public appointments of

Mrs Gandhi. While this rise in the status of Tytler should have made his opponents in the Party jealous, a section of them are happy. After all, they say, powerful men like R. K. Dhawan and Yashpal Kapoor will soon be joining the anti-Tytler camp.



WHO'VE RUSHED IN NOW ?

The Afghanistan situation has given rise to a new brand of political humour in the capital. Recently a poster appeared on the walls of the city which said : "Travel free : visit the Soviet

Union before the Soviet Union comes to visit you. For particulars contact Russia's comrades available all over India."

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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Mrs Indira Gandhi has completed more than a 100 days in office. SUNDAY commissioned an opinion poll in the four major cities to find out the degree of Mrs Gandhi's popularity after being returned to power.

Sandhya Photo



Ram Bulchand Lalwani who made an abortive attempt on the life of Mrs Gandhi is awaiting trial. What drove Lalwani to throw a spring knife at the Prime Minister? Was he trying to draw attention to his personal problems? Or, did he have other motives? OLGA TELLIS draws a profile of the failed assassin.



Sophia Loren, Italy's living legend, began life as an illegitimate child amid grinding poverty and wartime chaos. We present extracts from an intimate biography by Alan Levy which project Sophia as woman, wife and mother.

Baba Gurbachan Singh, the ruling Nirankari chief was shot dead by unidentified men on the night of April 24 at the Nirankari Bhawan in New Delhi. After five unsuccessful attempts on the Baba's life, the killers finally met with success. A few arrests have been already made and the task of tracking down the Baba's killers has been entrusted to the CBI. P. S. Bhinder, the Delhi Police Commissioner called this "the best planned murder I have ever seen in my career".

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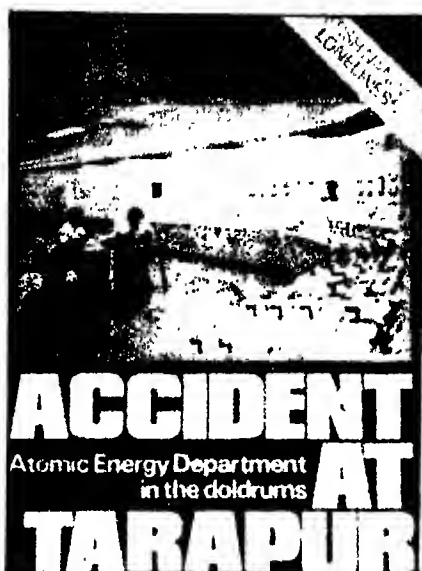
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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmul Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abhi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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Dirt cheap?

THIS refers to the cover story "Accident at Tarapur" (April 6) wherein your special correspondent says obliquely: "In a country where life is dirt cheap, a few radiation patients cause no outrage." I do not think our country, or any other for that matter, looks down upon its highly qualified technical personnel. In fact even though we are yet to achieve the degree of safety-consciousness of the advanced countries, the industrial worker in India is among the best cared for. My employer M/s Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. Korba (M.P.), for instance, takes good care of its employees. Even better medical facilities are provided in steel plants and companies like IEC and BHEL. Anyone working in a public sector undertaking can rest assured that his life and health is not treated as "dirt cheap".

Lucid, moving

BRITISH NANDY in his touching and evocative essay on "Loneliness" (April 6) rises from the level of humdrum journalism to literary heights. His style is lucid, to the point of poignantly sentimental pathos. He has touched upon all aspects of contemporary importance, dwelling on personal experience. The concluding paragraph about his own children, a mark of profound artistic merit, is particularly moving. C. K. Mohammed, Tellicherry.

MOST of us, irrespective of age, combat loneliness by reading or listening to Vividu Buarati. It is often said that only books can share your emotions; they are your lasting friends and your best friends are the worst enemies of your books. Koneti, Cuttack.

I can assure your special correspondent that my own college mates who have been working with the Atomic Energy Commission for over ten years are hale and hearty, far from suffering from incurable insomnia or heart attacks. Engineering is a field of calculated risks. Although we work in conditions of extreme heat, dust, radiation and what have you, we have chosen this career fully aware of its occupational hazards.

It is true that accidents do not just occur, they are caused. Yet, there are bound to be pin holes in pipes, run outs in furnaces, short circuits in transmission lines and loose scaffoldings at construction sites; it is only human to err. Olga Tellis ("Department of atomic energy in the doldrums", April 6) should know that if at all we are failing today in any field, it is due to lack of experience.

B. S. Arni, Bilaspur.

I HAD the opportunity of visiting the Tarapur Atomic Power Station and watching it in full operation. Operational problems at the power station are not unusual. The only thing exceptional about the present situation is that one has to take precautions against radioactive contamination and damage to the reactor core. The fact that this was prevented is a tribute to the competence and hard work of the power station personnel. Blaming the Department of Atomic Energy for the delays in implementing the Nuclear Energy Programme is also not fair. Olga Tellis herself describes how factors like labour trouble, power shortage and similar external trouble have slowed down the work. No doubt, we would have been better off if we had been producing the projected 2,700 MW of nuclear power, but the scientists are the least to blame.

M. N. Sastri, Visakhapatnam.

THE causes of loneliness can be varied — parental neglect during infancy, lack of proper company in youth, marital and family strains. Loneliness, in some form or another, is an inevitable lifelong companion. One can overcome loneliness only if he acquires mental peace and equanimity.

A. H. Subramaniam, Pune.

LONELINESS is nothing new. From a platform peddler to the professor of philosophy, men from all walks of life can easily identify themselves with the author. But the author has not said what could heal humanity from this malady. The remedy lies in education. The modern system of education, as we all know, is a failure. Academic institutions are breeding only machines and nothing else, machines with no character.

Prasanna, Cuddalore.

Not I

THIS is with reference to the article "How the Illustrated became a weekly habit" (March 30). There is an erroneous reference to me in the article. I am not the editor of the Sunday edition of the *Times of India*. Mr Girilal Jain is the editor of both the daily as well as the Sunday edition of the paper. Fatma Zakaria, Bombay.

Picking on parents

WITH reference to "My son doesn't like school anymore" by the Rev Kuruvilla Chandy (March 2), the author has aptly expressed the anguish of many parents and educators. But his contention that the hasty overburdening of children in nurseries with more work and less play is solely due to the pressure of the parents who do not know the rudiments of child psychology and education is only partially correct. A parent need not be a degree-holder in psychology or education in order to know and cater to the needs and longings of his child. While every parent is thrilled to the point of personal fulfilment when they see their little ones start to read, write and chime a rhyme, many of them do know it is unjust to overtax their children with work. They know it is useless to stop and protest. They are simply helpless as they watch their children being moulded to meet the demands of a system that prepares them for employment.

Being a teacher, I would like to draw attention to the schools in Nagaland. Privately-owned English medium schools have sprung up galore, all promising Cambridge standards. The mediocrity of the education imparted through all these schools is pathetic. There is absolutely no incentive for the students to learn more than what is prescribed in the books or to seek the joy and wonder of learning and discovery. Nor do the teachers care to become competent in their profession as teaching has also become just another means of earning a livelihood. Nobody is to blame as the system meets the demands of the situation sufficiently.

To support the views of the Rev K. Chandy, attention also must be drawn to the new curriculum, prescribed by the Directorate of Education, Nagaland, especially for the children of the primary section. So far they have been two years in Kindergarten prior to class one, but the new curriculum catapults them right into class one after a single year of pre-primary schooling. The time prescribed in the curriculum for creative activities, games and sports is appreciable. But it is inhuman to confront the tiny tots, after spending only a year with an

alphabet and number book and learning a few rhymes, with two separate books on Alternative English and two other books on environmental studies and practical moral science. Can the time provided for play — which will frequently not be properly utilised for lack of facilities — adequately compensate the damage done to the children otherwise?

It is only natural that every concerned parent will want his child to study more than to play. But the educational authorities should know better.

Joy Joseph, Wokha, Nagaland.

Corrupted, disrupted

"BHOODAN means loot" (April 6) by Arun Ranian was very revealing. It is not the government, but the people who should oversee the operation of such voluntary schemes. The Bhoodan movement was not only a total failure but also generated corruption and dirty politics. What the zamindars gifted to the people was wasteland, and Vinoba Bhave earned himself a name for it. To make matters worse, the 'saint' of Paunar developed an Indira mania; how could a non-political person be partial to a particular political Party?

Paul J. Mannemplanan, Garo Hills.

Remember?

WITH reference to "Zimbabwe is born" (March 23) by David Caute, in the jubilation that accompanied the emergence of Zimbabwe as a new and independent nation, many forgot the man who made it all possible, Lord Carrington. Whether due to ingratitude or forgetfulness, this lapse is unforgivable. But for Lord Carrington's able negotiation, the two uncompromising guerrilla leaders would never have come to terms with the bi-racial regime of Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The fact that Lord Carrington belongs to that fast disappearing breed of men who are content to remain out of the limelight, does not excuse the failure to acknowledge his laudable contribution.

Sathish Jayarajan, Bangalore.

A thriller alright

ONE thought that book reviewers descend from heaven once in a while, to have a swipe at the author of a new publication before returning to their bliss. Vimal Balasubrahmanyam's review of Le Carre's *Smiley's People* ("Death rite for a departed spy", March 23), however, breaks new ground: he is certainly more representative of the genre of common readers. Where one disagrees with him is when he forgets that a thriller is a thriller—whether it is highbrow or lowbrow remains irrelevant. It serves its purpose if it keeps the reader engrossed, that is, causes him to miss an appointment or overstay on a running train. Le Carre succeeds admirably in this.

A. Das Gupta, Calcutta

Ditto Hindi films

IT IS not unusual to read a variety of views and banalities on advertising and its many vagaries. But it is rare to see the writer hopelessly culpable in his own writing, of the sins which he lays at the door of advertising.

The burden of Ashish Rajadhyaksha's song ("Do our ads tell lies?" March 9) is that advertising misleads the poor moronic consumer. He then expands, to his own rather more intelligent readers, on theories and research findings which are entirely quaint and call for a chapter and verse reference. He says glibly: "A recent study has proved that one of the reasons why Hindi cinema has been so effective in moulding working class tastes is that they needed a more accessible fashion-culture as alternative to the elite exclusiveness of the culture that advertising constantly emphasises to them but at the same time makes known to them that it is not for either their purses or their tastes".

Undoubtedly this "recent study", if it exists, was conducted among peo-

ple who have not been near Hindi films, nor know that the very legitimate and stated claim of a number of successful Hindi filmmakers is to create an escape and a fantasy in their films for the greater entertainment of their audience; and this is reflected directly in the fashion-culture that their films portray.

Instead of relying on information that appears to be patently dubious it might help if the writer of the article exposes himself to the popular, super-hit Hindi movies in town; then maybe his outlook on advertising will be less jaundiced.

In another place Mr Rajadhyaksha blithely declares that the Modithread ad now guarantees footwear longer life. Whereas, there is no mention of footwear in the ad; in fact it purports to sell superfine thread for embroidery and displays a full-size gown embroidered with Modithread. So if people who are allegedly scanning advertising are bent on being misled by it, can you blame advertising?

C. Passanah, Chief of Operations, Clarion Advertising Services Ltd., Bombay.

My book too

ANGLO-INDIANS: the forgotten community" by David McMahon (March 16), bore special significance for me. I am perhaps the only person to have written a novel in Bengali, dealing with Anglo-Indian life. The novel, *Svairini* (Unchaste), published in 1955, was a result of my interest in a community which was born and bred in an environment of poverty, ignorance and evil. It was a study of those people who have been neglected by both the Indians and Europeans, people who have western manners dress and habits.

This work of fiction is a record of the day-to-day life of a young Anglo-Indian girl, her associates and lovers. It is not a romantic picture as painted by John Masters in *Bhowani Junction*. The name, *Unchaste*, was itself ironical. It was in keeping with the common notion that women of the Anglo-Indian community have no exemplary morals. On the other hand, my fictional heroine was a noble person, who sacrifices herself at the altar of truth.

After a few editions, in 1967, I renamed the book *Urbasir Narak* (The Court Dancer's Hell).

Ramapati Basu, Calcutta.

Man's monopoly

SUNDAY, in spite of its male chauvinistic presentation of nude females on its pages, has done a commendable job by highlighting the notorious Mathura rape case ("Women against rape" by Oiga Tellis and Saumitra Bawerjee, March 30). The bankruptcy of our decadent social system is once again evident: two policemen after committing rape could go scot-free. How can our highest court of law fail to see that a police station cannot be a place for legal or illegal intercourse, and that no woman should be summoned to a police station for investigation? Under these clauses alone, the erring policemen can be punished.

It is encouraging to witness such an organised movement against the philosophy of treating women as animals. The protest marches in Delhi and Bombay are a good beginning. It is the duty of every right-thinking citizen to raise his voice against the merciless exploitation of half of mankind, and the police, who cannot protect a helpless girl like

Mathura from the ravages of maniacs.

Kalyan Bhattacharjee, Shillong.

THE report unmasks the ugly face of society. The tragedy of Manjula and Mathura is nothing but the repetition of an old tale. Rape is man's monopoly. It is the most brutal and heinous social crime; its perpetrator suffers little social censure, while the victim is put to shame for the rest of her life. The protest of urban women against this crime may be a sign of maturity and willpower, but the same degree of consciousness is yet to be seen among the weaker sections. A recent survey shows that out of ten cases of rape, in seven the victims are from the weaker sections.

Chandra Shekhar Dubey, Bhaagatpur.

IN SPITE of all my sympathies for the anti-rape movement, we were shocked to see the photograph of the mock rape. In fact, it has mocked the movement itself instead of mocking the rapist. This is clear from the expressions on the faces of the spectators — among whom are even children — who seem to be amused.

Soumyadeb Basu, Homanjan Dasgupta, Hooghly.

100 Days of Indira Gandhi

Opinion Poll by PATHFINDERS: INDIA



January 1980. India went to the polls to elect a new Government. After 33 months of the Janata Government, Indira Gandhi promised "a Government that works".

To the people at large, this meant controlling rising prices, better law and order and improvement in the quality of life. They gave her a majority in the Lok Sabha and waited for the promisee to be fulfilled.

April 1980. Sunday commissioned **PATHFINDERS: INDIA**, a leading marketing research organization to find out how the people judge her first hundred days in office.

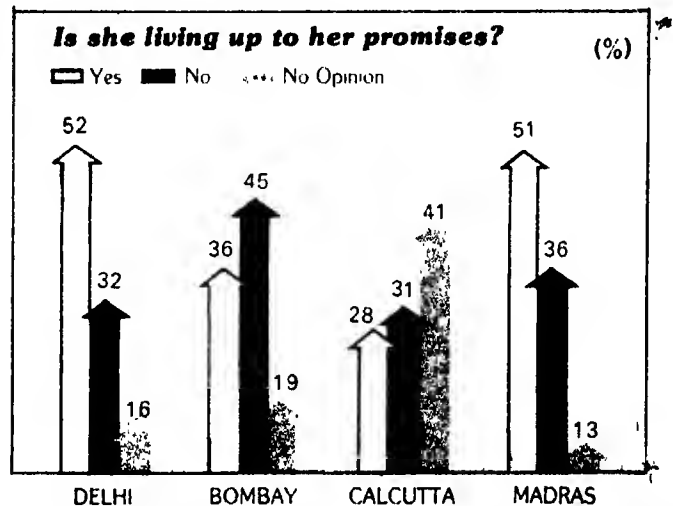
PATHFINDERS: INDIA conducted a poll in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. A random sample of over 2000 adults in these cities was interviewed by **PATHFINDERS** field staff on the 21st of April 1980.

Promises, Promises

The Congress (I) election campaign opened with a headline on the rise in onion prices between March 1977 and December 1979.

The other advertisements in the Congress (I) campaign pointed to the insecurity among the citizens from ruffians, thieves and other criminals, the plight of women, unavailability of essential commodities and the power crisis. Indira Gandhi asked the people to elect "a Government that works" as the choice against "one which wants another chance to mismanage your country".

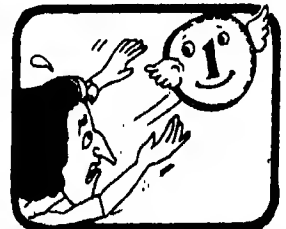
Opinion on whether she has fulfilled her promises differs in the four cities. The North and South, for all their other differences, agree that she is fulfilling her promises (52 percent in Delhi and 51 percent in Madras agree). The people in Bombay are of a different opinion (36 percent agree, 45 percent disagree) while in Calcutta they are undecided

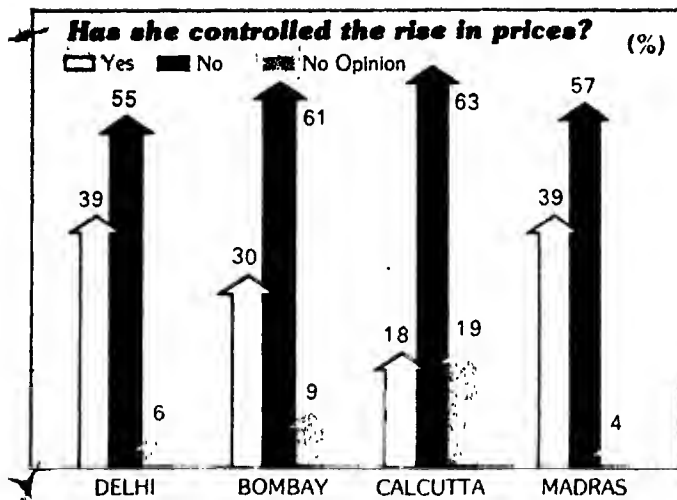


Pay More, Get Less

The prices have risen even after Indira Gandhi's return to power. Economic Times Index of wholesale prices for food items which stood 204.8 (1969-70=100) on the day Indira Gandhi was sworn in as Prime Minister rose to 213.2 by April 21, 1980, an increase of 4.1%. In between the prices had risen further, most sharply in the case of sugar.

The people have felt this where it hurts—in their pockets. The majority of people in all four cities feel that Indira Gandhi has not been able to check the price rise. The strongest indictment is in Calcutta (63%) while Delhi is least critical (55%).



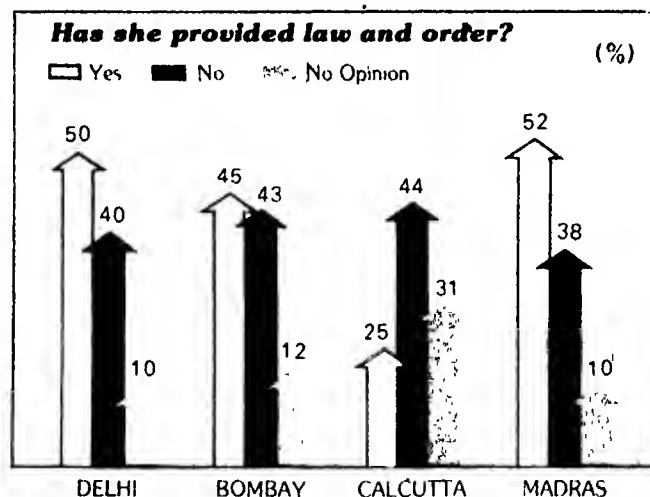


The crime reports during the period before and after Indira Gandhi taking charge do not show any marked difference. Reports of robbery and murder continue to appear even after the return of Indira Gandhi.

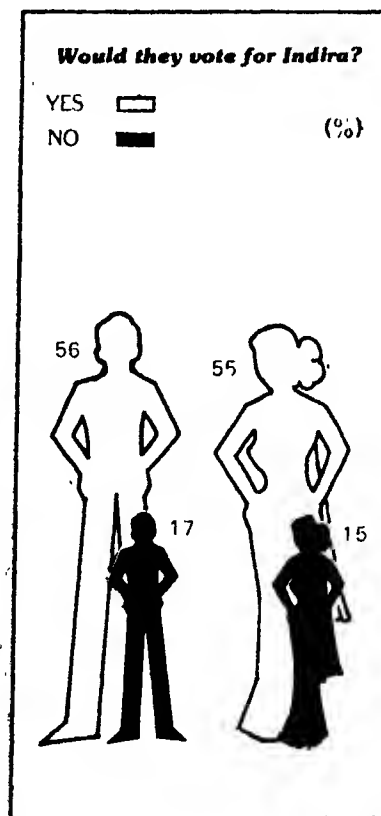
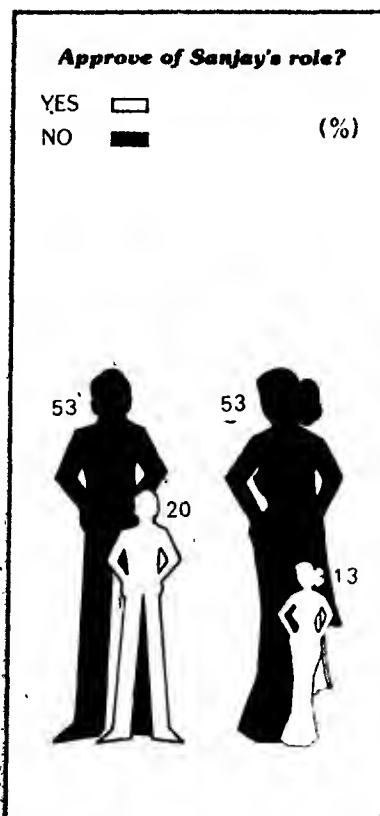
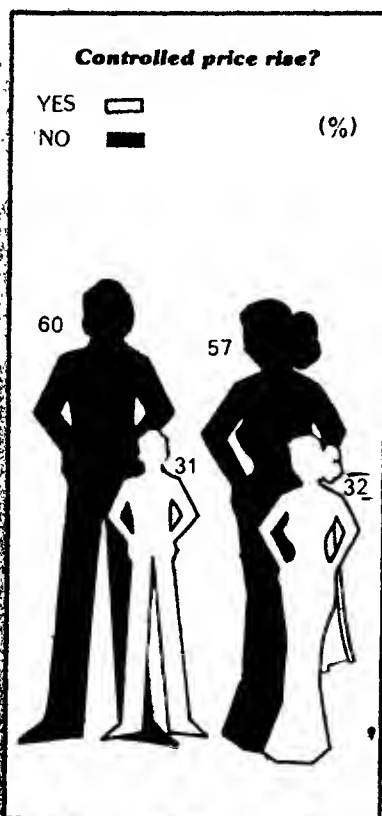
The opinions perhaps indicate a feeling of security more than actual improvement in law and order.

Order, Order

The poll shows that more people in Madras, Delhi and Bombay feel that the law and order situation is under control compared to Calcutta.



The views of the two sexes

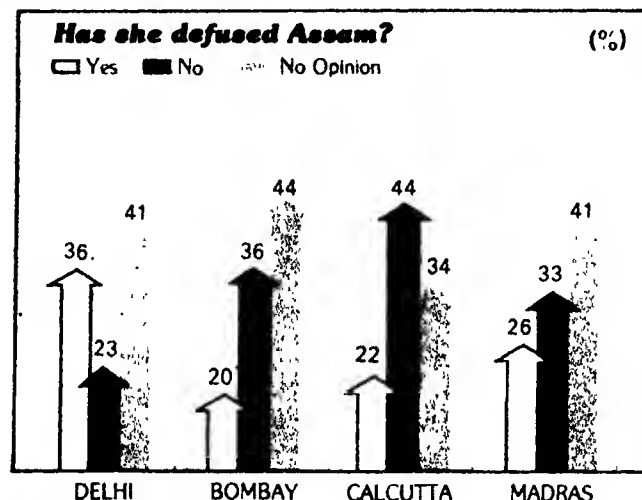


Assam - Ready To Explode?

Assam was in turmoil even before Indira Gandhi took charge. But perhaps the developments in Assam are too distant to involve people closely.

A large proportion of people have not expressed any opinion on how Mrs. Gandhi has handled the Assam situation.

Among those who have expressed an opinion, the majority feels that she has not been able to handle the situation well.

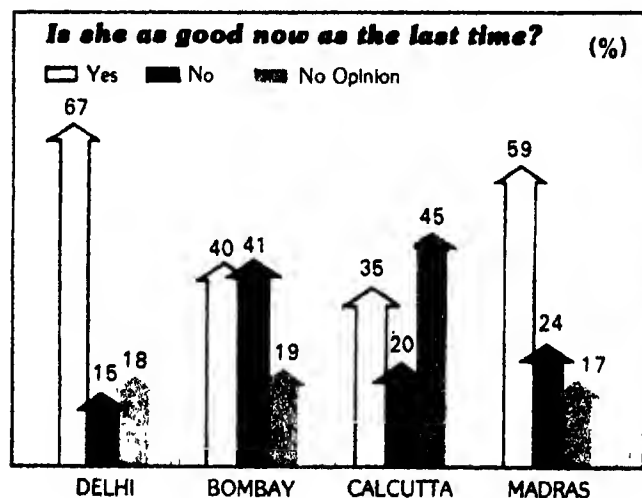


Indira: Yesterday And Today

Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister for ~~ten~~ years earlier. This was a period which saw many events including the nationalization of banks, liberation of Bangladesh and the Emergency.

The poll asked whether people thought she is as good a Prime Minister now as she was then.

A majority in Delhi and Madras think so, while opinions are divided in Bombay. A large proportion in Calcutta had no opinion.

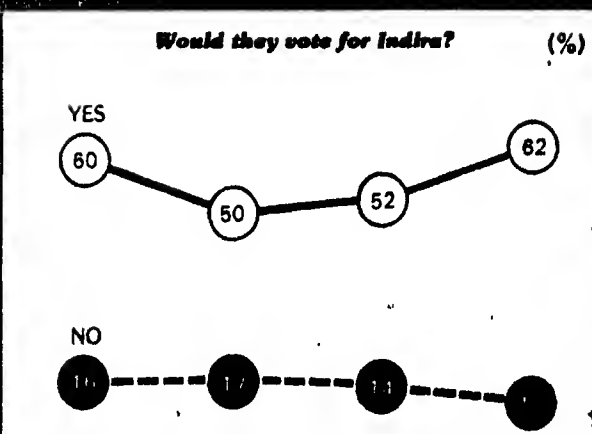
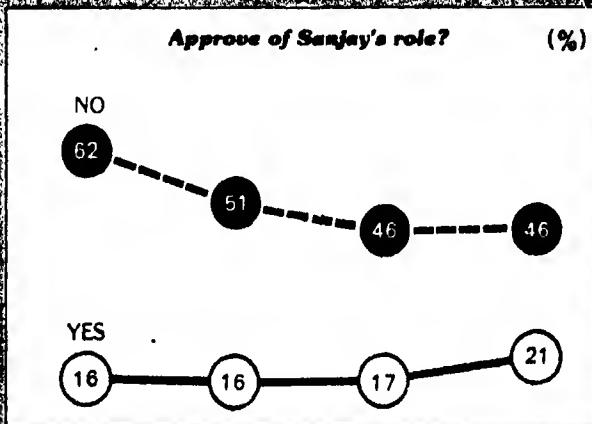
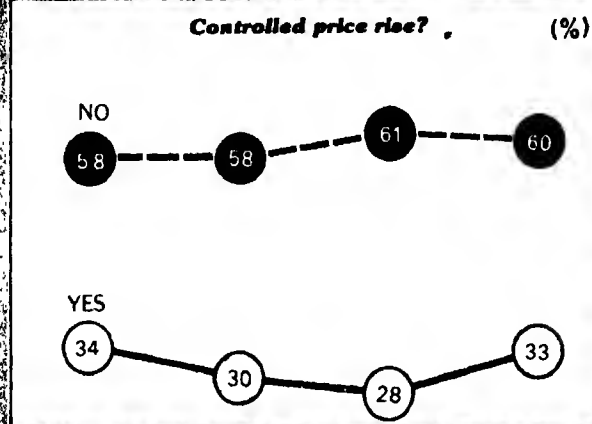


Sanjay Gandhi, MP

Sanjay Gandhi, though elected from Amethi with a thumping majority, continues to be Indira Gandhi's Achilles heel.



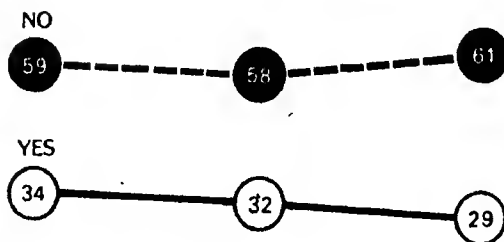
The young Vs. the not so young



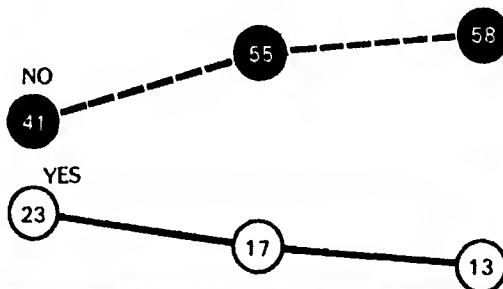
Only 8% of the people in Bombay and Calcutta approve of the role Sanjay Gandhi is playing in national politics. Delhi and Madras seem more willing to forgive and forget with 26% in Delhi and 25% in Madras who approve.

Education and opinions

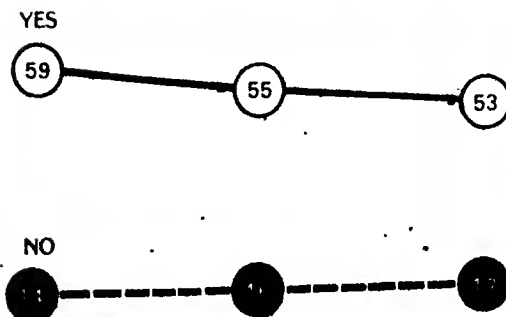
Controlled price rise? (%)



Approve of Sanjay's role? (%)

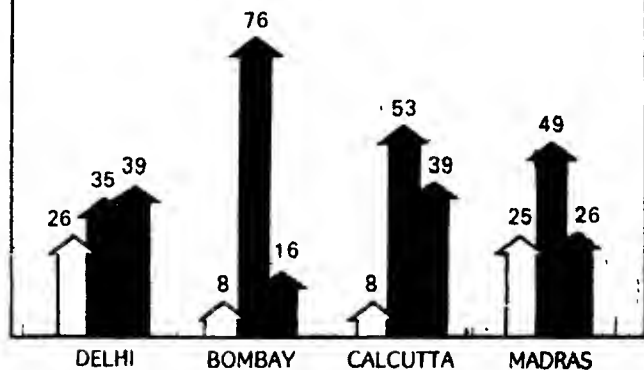


Would they vote for Indira? (%)



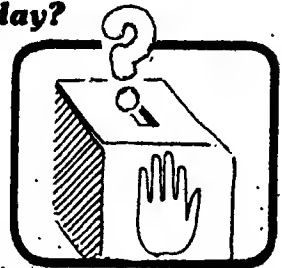
Do you approve of Sanjay's role? (%)

□ Yes ■ No ■ No Opinion



Will She Be Elected Today?

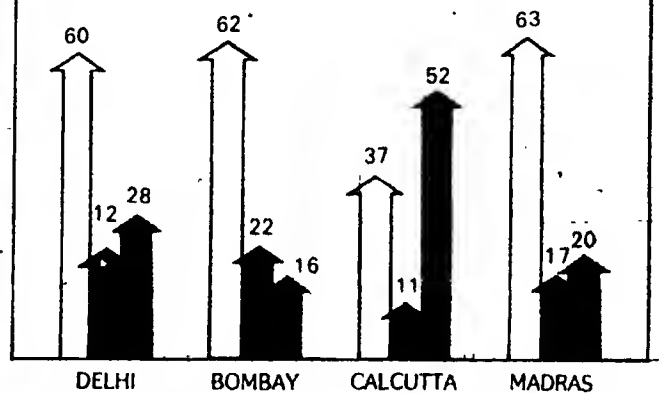
Indira Gandhi's party won a large proportion of the votes polled in Maharashtra (53.3%), Delhi (50.5%) and Tamil Nadu (54.1% with her allies) in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. In West Bengal her party polled 36.4% of the votes.



Support for her is higher today in these cities. If an election were held today about 60% of the people in Bombay, Delhi and Madras would vote for her. A large proportion of Calcuttans have not expressed their opinion on this question but among those who have expressed an opinion, the majority would vote for her.

Would you vote for her today? (%)

□ Yes ■ No ■ No Opinion



Charisma Or Performance?

In sum, the poll shows that one hundred days after returning to power, Indira Gandhi continues to be very popular and would win a sizeable majority in these cities.

This is in spite of her not doing well on specific issues and the absence of support for Sanjay Gandhi.

Perhaps this indicates a vacuum of leadership where Indira Gandhi is the only choice. Or could it be the victory of charisma over performance?

Where is the Government that works?

By M. J. AKBAR

*Indiraji ke baat par
Muhar laga di haath par
Chini pahuncha saat par
Mitti ka tel paanch par
Aur diesel ghunsa laal par*

ONCE upon a time, just a hundred days or so ago, a different verse was sweeping across that great traditional battlefield of Indian rulers, the Gangetic plains. That verse went, *Na jaat par na paat par, Indiraji ke baat par, Muhar lagegi haath par* (Not because of caste or creed, but on Indira Gandhi's promise, the ballot paper will be stamped on the hand symbol). This was the verse which gave Mrs Gandhi victory. Within the verse quoted above, which is quite obviously a sardonic take-off on Mrs Gandhi's earlier slogan, lie the seeds of defeat. Translated, the verse means: 'We heard Mrs Gandhi's promises and voted for her, but sugar now costs Rs 7, kerosene costs Rs 5, and diesel is only available after a fight'. India's most effective communication system, word of mouth, has already begun transporting the new verse to the remote villages of the north.

The disarray that troubles their ranks, and the dismay that informs their hearts, may make the current splintered opposition totally incapable of reaping any rewards from the growing sense of despair among the people. The frustration has two faces. On one side there is the sorrow of seeing yet another ineffective government, particularly in the midst of such national turbulence as we have rarely witnessed. And on the other side there is the anger that, this time around, the opposition seems even more incapable of providing an alternative. (This explains one of the contradictions visible in the opinion poll we have published in this issue. Even where the majority of the people indict the present government on its handling of prices and law and order, they still say they would vote Mrs Indira Gandhi if a poll were to be held now).

But history tells us—indeed, it tells us repeatedly—that the biggest sin in politics is complacency: when the people change their minds they do it with decisiveness and ferocity. If those in the opposition today are being dismissed as has-beens, one has only to consider what people were saying about the loyalists in Mrs Gandhi's camp all through 1977. "Finished" was the mildest term used to describe them. In the 1977 Assembly elec-



Imagemetres

tions, Mrs Gandhi never once stepped out of her house to campaign, such was the public fury against her. The current lot in the opposition are at least making some noises, however vague they may sound. Circumstances make heroes and villains out of politicians I have always maintained that the real miracle in Indian politics was not the return of Mrs Gandhi to power; the real miracle was the return of Morarji Desai after the desolation of 1971. After all, even in March 1977 Mrs Gandhi still had 25 per cent of the Indian people behind her: what popular support did Morarji Desai ever command personally?

The sentence that really brought Mrs Gandhi back to power was the one that could be heard all over during the campaign for the 1980 polls: "Is desh ko sirf Indira Gandhi hi chala sakti hai" (Only Mrs Gandhi can run this country). This was faith in the image of a tough, no-nonsense ruler. Time and Morarji Desai had dimmed some of the more unfortunate memories of Mrs Gandhi's rule, and tinted her decade in power with the glow of firm government. Even the Emergency, though still perceived as an aberration, seemed now an aberration in the right direction, a tilt towards firmness rather than a tilt towards drift. The first hundred days of Mrs Gandhi's present government have put this faith under strain. Rising prices, deteriorating law and order, and the inability to tackle the Assam problem have created serious dents in that image of the saviour; this is hardly the De Gaulle who was promised. And if this belief—that

Mrs Gandhi is a firm ruler—collapses, then the whole government will collapse, as there is nothing else which sustains this government apart from her personality. And in the eighties, Mrs Gandhi will have a much shorter "honeymoon period" than she had after her 1971 victory. The last time, despite having the enormous achievement of Bangladesh in her record, it took only a little more than two years for her popularity to start sinking. If her popularity was at an exceptional peak in 1972, it had also come to a dangerous low by mid 1974; by mid 1975, Mrs Gandhi had clearly become a loser. And Mrs Gandhi certainly begins with less goodwill in 1980 than she started with in 1971.

The Janata government was run as a consortium of powerful State chieftains presided over by an obstinate and incompetent chief whose survival depended largely on the factional struggles keeping the chieftains at each other's throats. In Mrs Gandhi's case it is the opposite. Here an all-powerful leader presides over sycophantic regional politicians whose survival depends on how vigorously they can nod their heads in assent. The new motto is: 'I have no ideology'. Indira Gandhi is the ideology.

This was not the case in 1971. Then the Congress Party still had enough room for fresh air—indeed, room for both fresh air and steam. To many it actually seemed as if Mrs Gandhi was ushering in a new era of social justice, and that this change would come through parliamentary democracy (many journalists, not to mention other assorted intellectuals, were willing to do the trumpeting for the new age). That was a decade ago; and during that dawn of the seventies, for many talented men and women it seemed that the revolution proposed by Nehru was coming into its own. The leadership of the present opposition is full of people who were with Mrs Gandhi then: Chandra Shekhar, Y. B. Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, Chandrajit Yadav...Everyone was ten years younger. Even Mrs Gandhi.

By October 1979, the problems of 1980 were clearly visible. The agitation in Assam had begun, and quickly the movement had become powerful enough to prevent any elections from taking place while the rest of the nation went to the polls. The shortage of diesel and power was playing havoc with both industry and agriculture, adding to the miseries of a vast drought across two-thirds of the country. If the drought did not

turn into a major famine it was because of the healthy food stocks built up in the past, but the possibility of another rainless year was high. And the power shortage could only grow worse, further damaging production. Prices had started rising, and the new government would have to do something to keep the traders in check if prices were to be held in control. Political instability had contributed to a deterioration in law and order. And by the last week of December, Russian troops had entered Afghanistan, suddenly changing the political map of the region.

And so the nation expected that Mrs Gandhi, when she came to power, would immediately take things into hand; here, after all, was a lady who had been Prime Minister for 11 years, returning to the helm of affairs with a majority which left her free of any worries about instability. In the very first week after her victory, there was a psychological impact on the nation. Worried traders did immediately slash prices. And then Mrs Gandhi began putting together her government. A first Cabinet was announced. Policemen and bureaucrats began to be shifted around: legitimate enough; a political leadership must have persons it can trust at the administrative level. Friends were promoted, enemies shunted out to where presumably they could do least harm. After that?

After that, nothing. Prices increased, lawlessness increased; the Cabinet remained incomplete, the budget could not get ready and there was little sign of any new economic policy on the horizon. The marketplace once again began to buzz with debates and rumours about personalities and their quarrels—no policy was available for discussion. Some Cabinet Ministers became the subject of unhealthy rumours (unhealthy for them, that is); the Youth Congress and its leader Mr Sanjay Gandhi became increasingly more powerful, and dressed in their kurtas and pyjamas they grabbed a large portion of the Assembly nominations; Mr H. N. Bahuguna, as expected, was humiliated and ignored by turns; slightly less expectedly, Mr Kamalapati Tripathi too found himself in the doghouse; nine non-Congress (I) state governments were dissolved, two were bribed into submission (in Haryana it is rumoured even the office typewriters of the Janata Party defected), and in those states where the Centre could not find the guts to dismiss the governments, the local Congress (I) loud-speakers began making hostile noises (not even the venerable Sheikh Abdullah, who had openly supported Mrs Gandhi in the national polls, was spared this embarrassment).

Well, what was new about all this? This seemed like politics as she is spoke. Par for the course. Was it

true then? Was Mrs Gandhi just another politician?

While a million words have been written about how the Emergency affected the nation, no one has really bothered to explore how the Emergency, and the consequent loss of power, may have affected Mrs Gandhi. Has it made her, at heart, less confident? Like justice, power must not only be exercised but also seen to be exercised. Power to guide and control events, to lead matters to a resolution; not power merely to stifle debate and cow down presumed or actual opposition. One may be wrong, after all it is only an impression, but there seems an uncertainty in Mrs Gandhi's style of functioning this time which is quite uncharacteristic of her.

The verse at the beginning of this piece is the reaction of the common man to Mrs Gandhi's first hundred days in power—and therefore worth far more than all the blah blah that journalists dish out by way of analysis. Even if the rulers ignore the media (and most do, whether they admit it or not), it is suicidal for them to ignore the people. As the Assembly elections will most probably prove, Mrs Gandhi's equation with the people still remains positive. Even if they are unhappy they will not condemn her or her government so soon. But they may not wait very long.

The limits of charisma

By PRAN CHOPRA

IF they could consider things objectively, even the most fervent supporters of Mrs Gandhi would not claim that her government has covered itself with glory in the first hundred days. Nor, however, would her most bitter opponents gloat over this fact if they could consider things objectively. As for that limited number of moderate and sensible people who are neither her enemies nor sycophants, but only want a Government that would be good for the country — they are scanning the horizon for such a government as farmers may scan it for clouds in a year of drought.

Certain things go to Mrs Gandhi's credit, conspicuous among them, the fact that she takes initiatives while others only wait. Among the top politicians she is always the first to be seen wherever the action is, whether it is Assam or the scene of the assassination of the Nirankari Baba in New Delhi or other areas of acute tension and distress. This has always been and continues to be her strong point.

Sometimes her initiatives break new ground, as in the case of Afghanistan and, to a lesser extent, Assam. On the Afghanistan issue, she brought India to a more viable position than the previous government had, and for a time India looked like playing a role behind the scenes of the kind she used to in the days of her greater diplomatic glory. Foreign VIPs again fell on New Delhi like autumn leaves. On Assam she came up with a formulation which, for a time, came closer than any other in closing the gap between the government and the student leadership.

But neither are the initiatives as frequent as they

should be nor are they as successful as one would wish them to be, and they could be both, as they used to be, if Mrs Gandhi could recapture her operational style of ten years ago. Over a whole range of issues, her present government is waiting upon circumstances instead of guiding them as she used to: it is reacting to events as though they were isolated fragments, not the inter-related symptoms of a spreading disease requiring a comprehensive policy design for curing it. What is worse is that its whole functioning is so non-systematic today that it is simply not able to take a comprehensive approach.

Two examples of the situation are that, a hundred days after it should have been presented, we are still without a proper budget, and nothing like a policy on prices is anywhere in sight. If prices have come down fractionally in a few places, they are going up elsewhere and the accumulated pressure of high prices upon the average consumer is as heavy as it ever was. Some improvement has been claimed in the transport of coal. But the power famine remains. In some areas it is more acute than before and in others, the policy responses to it have been fantastic in their folly.

The prospect is grim. Like a goat tied to a tree with a tiger prowling around, we wait helplessly for the next increase in oil prices. It is true that there is nothing we can do to tame OPEC. But the counterbalancing assurance we used to have, that there will always be enough foreign exchange to meet the import bill, is slipping away. Management of the domestic energy resources, especially the generation and effective distribution of electricity is, if anything, even poorer than it used to be.

Crime continues to ride high. All that has declined

is the decibel level of its denunciation. If the murders and mysterious deaths, which have lately occurred in Delhi, had occurred before January 8, they would have been severely denounced as proof that there can be no safety of life without a Government led by Mrs Gandhi. Today their condemnation is less noisy.

Political controversy is also less noisy, but that does not mean there is less controversy. The noise is less because less is allowed to leak out. The splinters and fragments of the old Janata Party are still fighting their wars of attrition in open places and in full public view. But that noise is so familiar, and now so inconsequential too, that it attracts little notice. On the other hand, the more interesting and significant noises, such as those made by the Bahugunas and the Vasant Dada Patils, are not allowed to travel very far from their throats. But this artificially created silence is, in some ways, more disturbing, just as muffled cries heard from a room you cannot enter are more disturbing than an open brawl in a street.

If some of all this sounds unfair to Mrs Gandhi, it is in a sense a tribute to her. She is the most charismatic politician India has had ever since Nehru's charisma began to decline in the late 1950s. Charisma arouses expectations, and in her case, they are backed by the memory of her enormous achievements in the period 1970 to 1974, which I regard as the finest in the history of independent India. The memory is soured by the two years of Emergency, the darkest in the history of Indian democracy. But the Emergency period, or, at any rate the first half of it, was redeemed by one thing: the Government had a sense of purpose and the people, the feeling that things were being done, and fast.

So the two most remembered periods of Mrs Gandhi's power have left behind them the impression that she is a leader who, right or wrong in any other way, would impart to the Government a sense of purpose and direction. That has given added power to her charisma and an added edge to expectations.

Some people expected nothing less than miracles and, therefore, were bound to be disappointed. But many of those who expected nothing more than the earnest beginnings of a serious effort to put together "a Government that works", to quote one of Mrs Gandhi's most popular election slogans, have also been disappointed. The first hundred days are long enough for such an effort to start, but the effort is not visible yet, and that is the cause of the disappointment among those who are neither her enemies nor sycophants.

Why is it not visible? One reason lies in the pressure of politics, which in three ways has played havoc. First of all, many excellent policies and persons have been jettisoned by the Government for the mere reason that although they had worked well by the country they had done so under the Janata Government. They were among the factors responsible for making the two years of Janata rule the best that the Indian economy has known for growth and for price stability. Therefore, these persons and policies had to be thrown out.

In replacing these persons, whether at the political or administrative levels, the sole criterion has been loyalty to the new rulers, not competence for the job. This is the second way in which politics has played havoc. This may be good politics, perhaps even necessary politics, considering the scandalous betrayals which have marked recent party politics. But, it is not good government. The third damage politics has done, and that in spite of the massive majority won by Mrs Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections, is that policies likely to prove unpopular, however good they might be, have been held back at least till after the Assembly elections. This is part of the reason why we still do not have a proper budget.

There is also perhaps a deeper explanation for the absence of any serious effort as yet to put together "a government that works" with a proper set of policies. The makers of the legend of charisma have, perhaps, themselves become its victims. The legend is not only that Mrs Gandhi alone can save India but that she can do so all by herself, armed with nothing more than her charisma and the love of the people for her. Not her party, not her colleagues, not her policies but only the magic of her personality is needed to do the trick. Therefore, her Party and her Party colleagues are quite content to dump the whole business at her doorstep, which means the Government moves only as one person does. In doing this her Party and her colleagues, and perhaps she herself, are ignoring the proof offered by her own present and past experience, that there are limits to what charisma can do. It can make good policies and a good team work better, it cannot become a substitute for them.

Mrs Gandhi was at her best — and then she was the greatest! — when she had a good team around her and could give the team the shield of security of her own popularity behind which they could confidently work and give her all their best. They did so by preparing for her sensible policy choices in great detail, and then with her own fabulous intuition, sense of timing and decisive thrust she took the final decision, and with good team work to help her, in which her own leadership was the best ingredient, she pushed the decision through to the end. That was charisma plus Government, each reinforcing the other. But deprived of this combination her power walks on one leg.

Perhaps Mrs Gandhi is aware of all this more than anyone else. Some people in Delhi believe that there is an acute re-assessment of the self going on within her, and her innumerable recent visits to temples and saints are not an empty gesture to the orthodoxy of the poor, whom she claims as her special constituency. They are part of a self-searching and a quest. Perhaps that is so, and if it is, one wishes her luck. For better or worse, she is going to be at the helm of affairs for years to come, and for the country's sake it had better be for the better.

But apart from this new quest she could turn with profit to the more worldly knack that she used to have — to discover talent among the lesser men around her, to deploy it with shrewd wisdom, and to get the best out of it by giving it the kind of backing which only her charisma can give. That would be getting the best out of charisma.



Mrs Gandhi's Second Coming

A HUNDRED days of Mrs Gandhi's Second Coming (with apologies to Prophet C. M. Stephen) are behind us. There have been no illuminations like at the time of the celebration of the Dynamic Decade of the earlier period. But facts and figures have been officially released to assert the glory that was the Second First Hundred Days.

Mrs Gandhi won her election on three slogans, albeit hyperbolic, which for a variety of reasons did succeed in catching the imagination of the people. First, rising prices. "Even onions cost Rs 5 a kilo," went the shrill refrain across the length and breadth of the country. Sugar, diesel and several other essential items figured in the campaign against the Janata-Lok Dal Parties. Second, the law and order situation. The villagers were told that in Delhi none could move out of their homes after sunset, that women were being raped at every street corner and school-going children abducted and murdered. In the cities one was fed with the supposed total collapse of law and order in the countryside. Third, the non-performance of the government and the inner-Party clashes that broke up the Janata Party. The nation needs a stable government, a government that works, was the slogan.

Now, what is the record?

Prices have been moving upwards with a vengeance. Sugar and diesel, cloth and manufactured items. About vegetables and edible oils and meat I shall refrain from quoting figures; every consumer is exposed to them at the shop counters. However, according to the government's own statistics, the general index of wholesale prices moved from 224.2 (1970-71 = 100) on January 11, 1980 to 229.2 on April 5—a 2.2 per cent increase. The index had moved up by 2.4 per cent between August 25, 1979 and January 12, 1980. It is, therefore, obvious that the monthly increase in the wholesale prices was much more in the first hundred days of Mrs Gandhi's government than in the 150 days of the Charan Singh government, which was only a caretaker government. As always, the wholesale index tells only a part of the story. The retail prices never figure in the index.

As for onions, the farmers who grow them in Nasik and Pune get anywhere between 10 paise to 60 paise per kg while the consumers pay anything from Rs 1.50 to Rs 2.50 per kg all over the country. When the farmers demanded a support price of 50 paise per kg, two of them were shot dead in mid-March in Pimpalgaon of Nasik district, and over 500 of them were sent to jail in Chakron of Pune district.

The law and order situation in the cities and villages have deteriorated to a point where in a place like

By GEORGE FERNANDES



Delhi, the police have stopped briefing the Press on the crime situation. More harijans have been killed during the 100 days of Mrs Gandhi's regime than during any hundred days during the 33 years of freedom. There has been a phenomenal increase in train robberies in these 100 days, with a gang of dacoits holding up a suburban train in Bombay—an unprecedented event—on the 100th day of Mrs Gandhi's rule.

The killers of the young Delhi college student, Gautam Jaisinghania, are still at large. Baba Gurbachan Singh, the spiritual leader of millions of Nirankaris, was shot dead right in his home. To top it all, Youth Congress (I) leaders have taken to molesting schoolgoing girls on a picnic at Naraini in Orissa, the older generation of Congress (I) leaders, like Devender Singh Garcha, MP, have been involved in incidents that have made ordinary people question the integrity of the law-enforcing machinery.

There have been communal riots in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh which have been either blacked out from the Press or played down to escape adverse attention from the people. And in Delhi, even the blind were not spared from the blows of a police force that is now headed in the capital by a man who was put up for trial on a charge of murdering a man in his custody.

As for the promise of a government that works, there is still no sign that it is working. For the first time in 33 years of free India the country is without a complete Cabinet for a hundred days.

There is no Defence Minister, though the borders have become extra-sensitive with the Afghan and Iran situations escalating every day. There is no Minister of Steel and Mines,

though this is one of the crucial economic portfolios. There is no Minister of Industry though it is he who more than anyone else has to provide the overall direction and monitor industrial growth. There is no Minister of Labour, and industrial relations continue to receive ad hoc treatment.

As for those already in the Cabinet, with a few honourable exceptions, most of them are faceless hacks, anyway.

The non-governance is nowhere more manifest than in the north eastern region of the country. The ham-handedness of the early weeks has been substituted by sheer madness in recent weeks in dealing with Assam. But it is not only Assam. Every state in that region is up in arms against the neglect and exploitation of the last three decades by the Brown Sahibs of Delhi who treated the north-east as a colony whose people had to be patronised. That policy has been pursued with more ruthlessness during these last 100 days.

The hundred days have also created an atmosphere for the Press, which had earlier gone to town against the Janata-Lok Dal governments, to discover the virtue of self-discipline. But sadder still has been the fate of the judiciary. If a Justice Shah who headed the commission has been told that he was nothing but perversion personified, the judge who heard cases of fraud, corruption, misuse of authority and other criminal offences against the ruling elite of the pre-March 1977 days have been asked to eat every word and every action of theirs during the 33 months of Janata-Lok Dal rule.

Were the hundred days utilised to draw up new perspectives, work out new priorities? One wonders. Mrs Gandhi has hardly had any time for such mundane exercises, what with her preoccupation with temple hopping and the favourite game of state government toppling. The factotums, however, have been at work, dismantling such job-oriented programmes as the District Industries Centres, the handloom and handicraft sectors, village and cottage industries. The vice-president has already been made to speak twice on the need to let multinational industrial corporations enter India, obviously in such sectors where the Janata government did not allow them to operate. The Minister of Energy has been wanting to hand over the power sector to private entrepreneurs. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting has made the startling discovery that colour television is the ultimate answer to the problem of India's poverty! The mother has reiterated her twenty points, and the son has missed on one of his to present us with four points.

A more dismal record of the first one hundred days must be hard to find.

No Deportation, No Oil!

Monday, April 28. The central office of the AASU within the precincts of the Cotton College in Gauhati was humming with excitement. At about 2 p.m. two student activists told PARTHA CHATTERJEE of SUNDAY that Prafulla Mohanta, the firebrand AASU president, spearheading the Assam agitation from his hideout would meet him. Soon, a white Ambassador car with a PRESS tag on its windshield materialised on the porch outside. Two members of the AASU executive committee, Rajkhowa and Bora asked Chatterjee to get into the rear seat. They sat in the front. After driving for an hour the car stopped before a small bungalow on the outskirts of the town. Chatterjee was escorted into the house where he had to wait for another ten minutes before Mohanta himself appeared. "Welcome", he said. And the interview began.

Q: Have you had any communication from the Government of India for fresh negotiations since your talks on April 12 with Mrs Gandhi failed?

A: No.

Q: Are you willing to begin a fresh dialogue?

A: Yes, we are. But Mrs Gandhi must create the atmosphere for a fresh dialogue.

Q: What do you mean by that?

Prafulla Mohanta, with Bhriku Phukan in the background



Raghu Rai

A: She must go back to the April 12 position. My colleagues are detained. Curfew has been imposed. Assam has been handed over to the military and the CRP. Our people are suffering. How can we carry on negotiations under such conditions? If Mrs Gandhi is really willing to find out a solution she must withdraw all repressive measures.

Q: If such a congenial atmosphere is created are you going to put any further preconditions before resuming talks?

A: We don't have many preconditions ... (We have only one condition) the determination of foreign nationals in accordance with the National Register of Citizens of 1951. That must be the base year for identification of foreign nationals. We are pressing for only identification now; about the deportation (of foreigners), we are prepared to leave that open. That can be subject to further discussions.

Q: Why are you giving top priority to the foreigners' issue when the economic issues that plague Assam are obviously more vital?

A: We consider the foreigners' issue as our major economic issue too. They are telling upon the economy.

Q: Don't you think that the deportation of lakhs of people is almost impossible?

A: We don't think so ... And if deportation is not possible, then the Government of India can distribute the foreigners among all the Indian states.

Q: I doubt whether that is feasible.

A: How can you expect Assam to bear the burden alone? It is the duty of the Government of India to persuade the other states in this matter.

Q: Have you thought of the human problems involved? You have to uproot thousands of people once again after they have been rehabilitated. By this time they have made Assam their home. They speak Assamese, their sons and daughters have been married here. You are suggesting uprooting two or three generations.

A: We could discuss humanitarian cases separately. It is also possible that after identification and deletion of their names from the voters' list, we can agree to a certain point that immigrants who have come before a certain date may be kept in Assam — say people who have come before 1961. But for those who came after that, there is no room in Assam.

Q: What about Hindu refugees from Bangladesh who came before 1971 — that is, before Bangladesh was born? They were mostly settled under government schemes.

A: Their citizenship status can be traced from government records. If they were rehabilitated by the government they will have no problems.

Q: The government has been concerned about the influx of foreigners into Assam; nobody has denied that this is a problem.

A: But, so far, nothing has been done about it. At least we don't find the government to be serious about it. We asked the government to seal the borders. Nothing has been done.

Q: Will you allow the foreigners to sell off their property before leaving?

A: That has to be decided by the law of the land. I personally think that all (their) possessions are illegal.

Q: Will there be deportation in phases, or at one go?

A: It must be by phases, according to a prepared list. We would like to give top priority to the deportation of those people who hoisted the Pakistani flag during 1965 in the char lands. I will show you where they are. (He asks his colleagues to bring a map; they do; they bring a huge map. He shows the interviewer.)

Q: How can you identify those people after so

many years?

A: The police have all the names.

Q: What will you do if Parliament amends the Citizenship Act of 1955 and confers citizenship on all Bangladeshi immigrants who entered India between 1951 and 1971?

A: We must oppose such an Act.

Q: Don't you think that the Indira-Mujib pact provides enough room for Hindu immigrants from erstwhile East Pakistan to be accepted as naturalised Indian citizens if they entered India before March 25, 1971?

A: This pact has little constitutional validity.

Q: Why have you started this movement after so years?

A: Most of us were not born when the influx started. Our elders may be responsible for (the neglect); we are not.

Q: One of the arguments used to make the case that foreigners should be sent away is that Assam will be 'culturally swamped'. Do you mean that Assam is for the Assamese alone?

A: Not at all. We have no worries about those non-Assamese populations in Assam who are bonafide Indian citizens. Their number is not alarming.

Q: How do account for the violence in the North Kamrup villages (in which Bengalis were attacked)?

A: We condemn such incidents very much. The incident took place following a murder of an Assamese boy by some anti-social elements. We must guard against such incidents even under provocation.

Curfew has been imposed. Assam has been handed over to the military and the CRP. Our people are suffering. How can we carry out negotiations under such conditions?

Q: What is your politics?

A: I have no politics. I do not belong to any party. You can call me a Gandhite. Gandhiji has inspired me very much.

Q: Don't you think that the oil embargo is causing harm to the nation? You say, No Deportation, No Oil, isn't it?

A: Yes. Because foreign nationals are causing more harm to us. And, after all, we are conserving oil, not throwing it into the Brahmaputra.

NEXT WEEK'S SPECIAL THE SAGA OF KAMDEO SINGH

An investigation into the life and death of Bihar's most notorious dacoit, the man from Begusarai who ran a private kingdom. The most powerful politicians paid him homage till he was killed by the police on April 18, 1980.

KARNATAKA STATE LOTTERY



7 First Prizes
Rs.1,00,000

7 Second Prizes
Rs.10,000

700 Fifth Prizes
Rs.50

70 Third Prizes
Rs.1,000

7,000 Sixth Prizes
Rs.10

140 Fourth Prizes
Rs.100

1,40,000 Seventh Prizes
Rs.5

**1,47,925 prizes worth
Rs.26,59,000**

Rs.2 per ticket

NIRANKARI BABA

A Shocking Assassination

By AJOY BOSE



FOR Baba Gurbachan Singh, spiritual head of the Nirankari Sikh sect, the writing on the wall was visible several years back—"Killer Gurbachan Singh cannot be spared". The slogan had been a constant scream on the walls of various cities for quite some time now. After five unsuccessful attempts, the killers finally found their mark right in the heart of the Nirankari Colony, just a few yards from the Baba's house on the night of April 25, 1980.

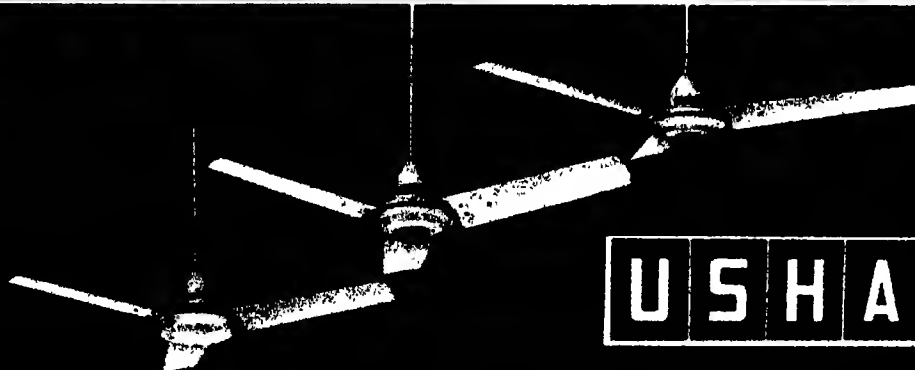
It was around 10.35 at night. The Baba was returning from a function at Paharganj. He was in his black Mercedes, DH07, sitting on the front seat next to the driver. Baba's wife, Kulwant Kaur also known as Mataji, sat at the back. The black Mercedes was followed by three other cars and a motorcycle. The Mercedes swept through the gates and stopped a few yards in front of the Baba's apartments. Baba's bodyguard, who was travelling in one of the other cars, got out and rushed to open the car door for him. Gurbachan Singh had taken only a few steps before some devotees who were waiting in the compound bowed down before him to touch his feet. The bodyguard was only a few feet behind the Baba. Mataji, meanwhile had walked up to the house and was about to open the front door.

It was at this point that the first shot rang out. It hit the bodyguard who staggered and slumped to the ground. The second shot went through the Baba's right shoulder just when he turned around upon hearing the sound of the first shot. The bullet pierced Gurbachan Singh's trachea and went through clearly. Four more shots followed. Two hit devotees, one ricocheted off a stone and the fourth made a deep gash in the body of the black Mercedes. The whole shootout was over in a matter of seconds. Absolute pandemonium followed. Groups of Nirankaris rushed hither and thither searching for cover. What caused more fear were two grenades which had been lobbed into the compound. One grenade did not explode but it sent the Nirankaris screaming for cover. In the melee, a few of the Nirankaris, including Mataji, rushed to the Baba's aid. Later, some Nirankaris claimed that the Baba had named his successor in his dying gasps. According to Mataji, however, Baba could not speak. Only his lips quivered. A glass of water was brought. He took a few sips and then slumped to the ground dead.

Baba's bodyguard, Pratap Singh also lay dead. The two devotees who were touching Baba's feet, when the tragedy occurred, escaped with minor injuries. The assassination had been a complete success.

Within half an hour, the Delhi Police led by Commissioner P. S. Bhin-

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der reached the spot. A thorough search of the entire colony, however, failed to locate the assassins. Even the police dogs lost track after a few hundred yards. The next day Bhinder would call it "the best planned murder I have ever seen in my career". Investigations revealed that the shots that had gunned down Baba Gurbachan Singh came from a resthouse—the Nirankari Satsang Bhavan. The assassins had fired from room 14 on the first floor of the Bhavan. The resthouse, which was about 20 feet from the compound in front of the Baba's apartments, is the place where Nirankaris normally stay when they come from places outside Delhi to visit the colony and pay their respects to Baba.

Room 14 is the corner room of the resthouse, just next to the staircase. The main window of the room faces the Baba's apartments. The windows of the room were old fashioned, divided into many one-square-foot glass panes. One of the panes was broken and the assassin had obviously pointed his gun at the Baba through the hole in the pane. The room had also an ideal emergency

exit—the bathroom window. The grill of the window had been removed. Just next to the window on the outside wall was a drainpipe leading right down to the ground.

The assassins had obviously planned the murder for quite some time. On the day of the assassination the room was vacant. In fact, the room is generally reserved for important guests of the Nirankari Mandal. The assassins are believed to have had good connections inside the mandal to have acquired the room in the first place. There were at least two assassins. One fired from inside the room through the hole in the window pane. The other, standing on the balcony in front of the room, had lobbed a grenade into the compound after the shots were fired. The grenade, however, did not burst. Another grenade which the assassins must have dropped when they escaped, was found near the staircase in the Bhavan. The two assassins took different routes for their escape. While the man who fired the shots is believed to have escaped through the bathroom window, the grenade-thrower had run down the staircase.

Both, however, fled in a waiting vehicle which probably had a few more accomplices. The murder weapon was a .30 semi-automatic rifle firing a magazine of six bullets. The grenades were standard army H-36 types but were some years old. This must have impaired their working condition.

The police found a number of interesting objects in the room: a sword, a screw-driver, a pair of pliers, a shirt and a wooden box in the shape of a log. Investigations revealed that the screwdriver and pliers were given to Ranjit Singh, a carpenter who had joined the Nirankari Bhavan about two months back. Ranjit Singh had, however, left the Bhavan two weeks before the assassination. The shirt had a tag-mark of an Ambala tailor. Police parties sent to Ambala found that the tailor shop was frequented by Ranjit Singh's friend and would-be brother-in-law Harinder Pal Singh. While, Ranjit Singh was found missing from his home across the Jamuna, one of his friends, Harjinder Singh, an electrician, was detained by the police and later confessed that Ranjit Singh had talked about a murder plot against the Nirankari

Mrs Gandhi comforts the sorrow-stricken Mataji



Focus

Baba. The same confusion was eliminated from another friend of Ranjit Singh—Gyan Singh who owned a workshop in Connaught Place, Delhi. Investigations also revealed that Ranjit Singh had applied for a passport about four months back. His application had, however, been rejected although it was signed by a Member of Parliament. According to CBI and Delhi Police sources, the whole conspiracy involved at least a dozen persons of which Ranjit Singh was one of the main conspirators. According to these sources, since Ranjit Singh was working as a carpenter it was easy for him to carry out a reconnaissance of the Nirankari Bhavan complex. It was Ranjit Singh who is believed to have carried the automatic rifle hidden in the wooden log-shaped box inside the resthouse.

As for the motive behind the killing, the police are yet to establish at least a clear reason at the time of writing. Although the capital is thick with rumours of political connections, the facts of the case and the consequences of the Baba's brutal murder do not point to any recognised political Party having a hand in the assassination.

It is true that the Akali Dal or an extreme militant section of it has always been bitterly critical and openly abusive of the Nirankari movement led by the Baba. The riots in Delhi, two years ago, by marauding bands of Akali youths against the Nirankari convention being held in the capital at that time was an indication of the contempt with which Akali Sikhs held the Baba and the Nirankaris. But politically, it would be extremely foolish for the Akalis to engineer such an assassination since such an action would immediately rob them of valuable support in the coming Punjab Assembly elections.

The Congress (I) will not gain from the Baba's murder. Many Nirankaris today are extremely disillusioned with the Congress (I) for failing to protect their leader in spite of repeated requests to the Government for his security. In fact, in a letter to Mrs Indira Gandhi, the All India Nirankari Working Committee chairman, Govind Singh, said: "Nirankaris had great hopes in the Congress, a Party wedded to secularism and having in its fold people belonging to all communities. Having suffered atrocities at the hands of Akali Sikhs for a long time, they had hoped for a peaceful life during the Congress regime. It is unfortunate that the Congress Sikhs, who claim to be nationalist and secular in outlook, have proved worse than Akali Sikhs. We continue to suffer at the hands of the Congress Sikhs as much as we suffered at the hands of the Akali Sikhs". The Nirankaris are particularly infuriated at the involvement of a prominent Congress (I) leader, Sucha Singh, in the attack on the Baba just a month before his assassination. Although angry letters were written about the involvement of Sucha Singh in the incident, and he had claimed that he had the backing of



Baba Gurbachan Singh

a Central Minister, nothing was done by the Congress High Command. The Nirankaris have traditionally kept an open mind about politics. In 1977, they had voted for the Akalis and the Janata Party.

After the Nirankaris suffered indignity at the hands of the Akali Sikhs, they switched their loyalties to the Congress (I) in the 1980 mid-term

polls and voted en masse for Mrs Gandhi. The Baba's assassination could well turn the tide against the Congress (I) since the Nirankaris have not been spared even under Mrs Gandhi.

While it is extremely unlikely that either the Akalis or the Congress (I) had any direct hand in the killing of Baba Gurbachan Singh, both have to take partial blame for the brutal murder. The Akalis have done little to work out an amicable compromise with the Nirankaris and have actively fanned the flames of hatred against the Baba. In fact, the Dal has encouraged Sikh extremists like Sant Jarnail Singh Bindrawala. The Sant has made several inflammatory statements in the past including one which threatened to "cut off the head of the Baba and hang it on the gates of the Gurdwara".

The Congress (I) leaders on the other hand were strangely apathetic to the Nirankaris' demand for tighter security for their leader. In March and April alone, at least a dozen letters were written by various office-bearers of the Nirankari Mandal, including one to the Prime Minister by the Baba himself, pleading with the government to provide adequate security. But nothing was done. Even the fact that five attempts were made on the Baba's life, and that an atmosphere of hate and viciousness towards the sect was built up by various extremist Sikh organisations, was completely ignored by the government. More than anything else, the Baba was a victim of this apathy. ■





ASTERIX and the BANQUET

by GOSCINNY
and UDERZO



AND THAT EVENING OVER-ANXIUS COMES, GNASHING HIS TEETH, TO SINK THEM IN THE EVIDENCE...



HERE ARE THE THINGS TO EAT AND DRINK WE'VE BROUGHT BACK FROM ALL OVER GAUL... HAM FROM LUTETIA, HUMBUGS FROM CAMARACUM, DUROCORTORUM WINE...



... SAUSAGE FROM IOLOSA, SAUSAGE FROM LUDDUNUM, SALAD FROM NICAS, FISH STEW FROM MASSILIA, OYSTERS AND WINE FROM BURDIGALA.

BUT THERE'S STILL ONE COURSE MISSING... THE SPECIALITY OF THIS VILLAGE!

QUITE RIGHT, OBELIX!

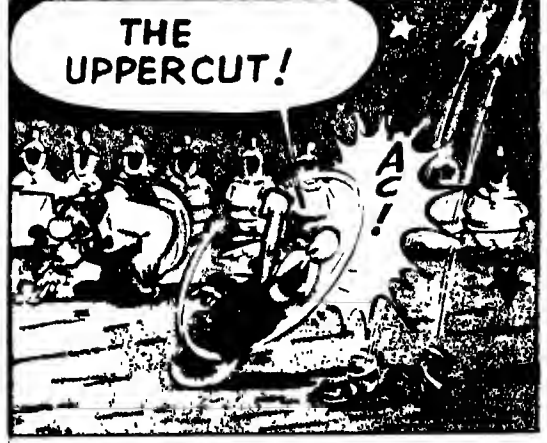


WOOF! WOOF! ?!

O, OVERANXIUS, YOU KNOW WHICH CUT OF MEAT IS OUR OWN SPECIALITY?



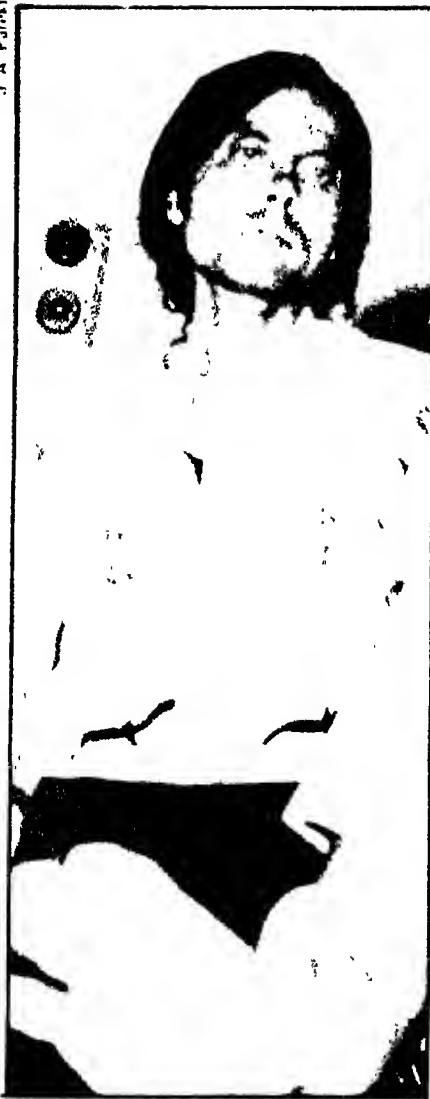
THE UPPERCUT!



AND OUR FRIENDS HOLD A MAGNIFICENT BANQUET TO CELEBRATE THEIR TRIUMPHANT TOUR OF GAUL, PUTTING BACK ALL THE DELICIOUS FOOD AND WINE OF THEIR BEAUTIFUL AND BELOVED COUNTRY... AS INSPECTOR GENERAL OVERANXIUS COULD CONFIRM, IT IS A GENUINE THREE-STAR MEAL...



J. A. Parikh



Lalwani

The man Ram Bulchand Lalwani

OLGA TELLIS went to Baroda to find out who he is



Lalwani's father

THE pale green seagulls on his white bush-shirt looked triumphant Wing-tip to wingtip. But the owner was a picture of defeat and desolate fear as he walked limply, almost being held upright by the Delhi Police who had escorted him to Baroda. Ram Lalwani, an obscure, angry 35-year-old mechanic, had reached the end of long tunnel of frustration in his struggle against injustice. His daringly irrational act of attempting to harm Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with a spring knife has made him the centre of a storm in which political scores are sought to be settled. Whether Lalwani acted on his own to earn notoriety, which is also an inverted form of fame, or whether he was the instrument of conspirators to do away with the Prime Minister is a matter under investigation. But Ram Lalwani's is a case which is multiplied mil-

tion times over in a country where money plays an increasingly important role over merit. There are millions of Lalwanis in offices, factories, in housing societies, in all sectors of life where injustice is perpetrated by an individual or coterie that has access to the levers of power.

Ram Lalwani was the youngest of five children, two boys and three girls. His mother, Sitabai, died more than 15 years ago after spending around 12 years in a lunatic asylum. She suffered from mental depression and isolation from her husband who was more of a recluse. There was no communication between them. Bulchand Lalwani, Ram's father, has an old-world nobility about him. He has been observing *maun* (silence) for nearly 17 years and communicates in writing whenever he has to. In fact when he was told that Ram was stabbed in a hospital and that he should go and visit him, he merely took out a piece of paper and noted down the ward number and the name of the Delhi hospital. He didn't really go and see him. Bulchand is an author of a book in English entitled *Ramraj Scheme of Gandhiji*. In this he expounded a theory of a new kind of government and in the last



Purswani, Lalwani's landlord

chapter he predicted that his son Ram would usher in this new era first in Baroda and then throughout the country. He has also written a two volume book in Hindi entitled *How to Bring Heaven on Earth*.

Whatever ambitions Bulchand may have had for his son, they certainly didn't materialise. When Ram was 20 he had a brain operation in which water was removed from his brain. No sooner was he a little better in the hospital than he ran away creating quite a commotion. Ram was a loner, an eccentric. According to his neighbours he was quarrelsome. "He would speak to you quite nicely for about 10 minutes but after that he would find a reason to quarrel", said his neighbour on the ground floor of Pratap Bungalow. "We don't remember anything about him as a child because he hardly ever mixes with anyone. In fact, he was not even friendly towards his own brother (who is one of the five remanded in the case)". His brother, Kishen, was working as an engineer in Ahmedabad and was transferred to Baroda in December. He stayed with his wife and two children in his father's house. For a few days everything was okay, but then after that Ram started de-



Lalwani's house



The four accused; Pratap Ramchandani, the deputy mayor of Baroda (third from left)

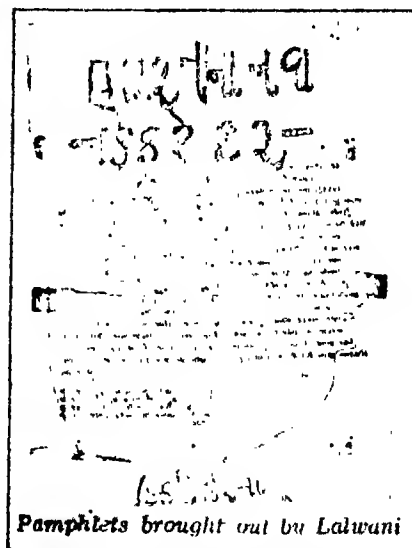
manding that they leave the house. Kishan asked for time saying how difficult it was to find a place. So one night when everyone was asleep Ram sprinkled chilli powder on all of them. There was pandemonium in which even the neighbours were awakened. After that Kishan and his family left the house and stayed with one of his friends, Radhakrishan Chandwani, an accused in the case.

Ram obviously did not like company, though the workers of the Calico factory in Jawaharnagar where Ram worked said, "He was easy to get along with. He was a good worker". He earned around Rs 600 a month. The biggest problem

that bothered him to the point of driving him crazy was his house. The neighbours too were embroiled in the same problem and sympathised with him on the issue.

Pratap Bungalow is situated in a predominantly Sindhi area of Varashiva. Sindhi immigrants from Pakistan had settled down there on properties given to them by the government. Around 1956, this property was to be auctioned, and as Mohan Vaswani, one of the tenants said, "A Sindhi gentleman, who is recognised as a saint in the community wished to buy it. So even though we all wanted to pool in our resources and buy the building in the auction, we

stepped aside and let him buy it for Rs 50,000. The building had 25, two-room tenements and a big compound. After it was sold, this 'saint' suddenly acquired two partners, one of them the present landlord, Mr Lilaram Purswani. These three people then asked all the tenants to quit as they needed the building for their own use. Purswani had put up a bread and biscuit bakery in the compound and also a tin factory which was later shifted elsewhere. Some of the tenants, who could afford it, left. One of them was Mr Pratap Ramchandani, who is today the Deputy Mayor of Baroda and also one of the accused in the case. Pratap Ramchandani moved out more than ten years ago and had nothing to do with the Lalwanis. However, the other tenants like us stayed on as we could not afford to go anywhere. You know how difficult it is to find a place and how much black money is involved. Even though we are all earning people, how can we afford it?"



Pamphlets brought out by Lalwani

Lalwani in the custody of the police



And so the tenants went to court. This process was one long trail of defeat. They lost in the Small Causes Court, then the City Civil Court, then the High Court and finally, in 1978, the Supreme Court gave its verdict asking the tenants to vacate their premises. The small-time businessman and landlord, Mr Purswani, won throughout. In desperation, the tenants appealed to the President of India last year, Mr Sanjiva Reddy. The President forwarded their case to the Government of Gujarat which made enquiries and found that it could do nothing regarding the matter. This was the last straw for the tenants and Lalwani. Ram Lalwani was bitter. Out of his monthly income of Rs 800, about Rs 300 had gone straight to the lawyer. There was a common lawyer and, over the years, each family must have spent a total of Rs 15,000.

As was his habit, Lalwani brought out pamphlets. When they lost the case in the Small Causes Court, he brought out a pamphlet against the

judge of the Small Causes Court. His pamphlets were scurrilous by bourgeois standards. When the President forwarded the case to the Gujarat Government, Lalwani brought out a pamphlet alleging that the Government is in the pockets of money-bags, implying that the poor and helpless had no chance against money power. In the pamphlets, cyclostyled in Gujarati, Lalwani alleged that his landlord had "threatened that if I don't vacate I shall meet the fate of those who were crushed under Sanjay Gandhi's bulldozer. The landlord had purchased Pratap Bungalow sixteen years ago in a government auction. As he was a staunch Congressman and close to the former mayor and minister, he made millions of rupees in the blackmarketing of sugar and maida, and created a factory in Pratap Bungalow itself. He bought scooters, buildings and cars with black money and does not pay income tax. Because he is close to ministers, his books are not checked. He pays lakhs of rupees to the Congress in elections.....eight rooms of Pratap Bungalow are vacant. He neither gives them to anyone nor does he stay there".

Kalidas Parmar



Lalwani being wheeled to his room near the laboratory on the first floor of the SSG Hospital, the morning after he was stabbed by Parmar

Lalwani felt that because his landlord was a Congressman, he was doing all this against the tenants in order to give rooms to those Congressmen whom he wanted to please. He wrote against the Janata Party for not giving a new deal to the people and said, "if the Janata Party does not do anything it is like the Congress Party". He even made scurrilous allegations against the then Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, who, he said, enjoyed the patronage of the landlord.

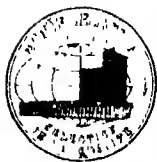
In a pamphlet published in 1979, Lalwani wrote: "The government helps foreigners like Bangladesh refugees but does not take care of Indians who are being subjected to atrocities and tyranny. The Supreme Court notice is over. Any day now my luggage will be thrown out. But I am not quitting Pratap Bungalow which belongs to the Union Government. The government must withdraw the Supreme Court order otherwise I will think I am not treated as an Indian but as an outsider. Kings used to enquire into such things. These elected ministers do nothing except getting their photographs published in the papers".

In one of his last pamphlets he cries out: "Why did Gandhi-Nehru liberate this country? Did they not think that the poor in this country need Roti-Kapda-Makan? 20-year-old tenants need a house. If the Janata government cannot keep people happy it must quit".

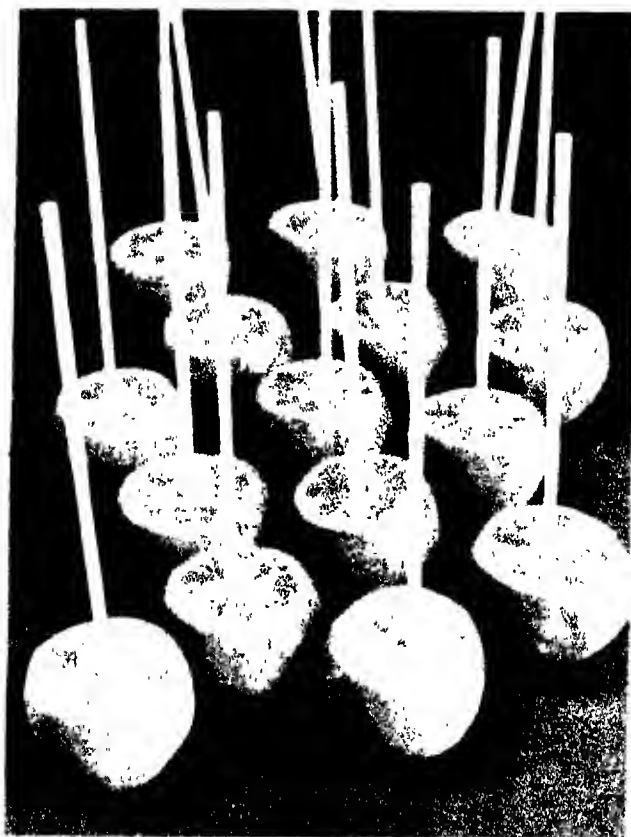
Lalaram Purswani, the Gandhi-capped unflappable landlord who has

an office room in Pratap Bungalow in addition to five other rooms, said, "I have never met Ram Lalwani face to face. I have of course received his pamphlets against me. But justice is justice and the Supreme Court said in 1978 that they should be evicted. Why can't they go? Others have gone. They pay Rs eight as rent".

Ram Lalwani's anguished cry for justice was a cry in the wilderness. It was a cry that one hears from millions of people one meets in everyday life—people complaining against landlords, against bossism, against unfair treatment, harassment. Some end their lives, some go crazy, all driven by a common social and economic injustice, brought about by the immense power wielded by money and top political connections. Such a person could be driven to irrational action. Such a person could also be used by others, which, in any case, would have been a dicey proposition. Ram was last seen by his neighbours on April 12. "He was standing on his balcony, staring into space", said one of the neighbours. "He must have been standing there for hours". He obviously took the Sunday morning train to Delhi to rise to soaring heights of notoriety on Monday, April 14. Perhaps he thought that if he had a potshot at Mrs Gandhi, the tallest of the land, he would be able to focus on the injustice he was fighting. Perhaps, in the playground of his fevered, anguished mind, this was the only way to meet the bulldozer of money power.



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THE WORLD

Oh baby!

Never has so much copy been written about such a 'small' wonder — Louise Joy Brown, the world's first test tube baby who cried for the first time on July 25, 1978. In fact, other than feature writers, Louise's creators, Doctors Edwards and Steptoe, promptly got down to the task of writing about their scientific breakthrough in a book, *A Matter of Life*. Louise, incidentally, is now 21 months old and is growing up into a healthy child. Dr Steptoe described her after birth as "beautiful too, really lovely". And she is living up to the description. In a moving sentence Dr Steptoe spoke about the time when he handed little Louise over to her mother: "I doubt if I shall ever share such a moment again". But whether or not that moment or the scientific breakthrough



Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards

was really worth sharing with the people of the world was investigated by an American magazine in a recent opinion poll. Most readers of the magazine thought that the scientific achievement was "repul-

sive" and others thought it as "experimental". Some even said it was a "miracle". The only solution they could think of was adopting a child and not going into having a test tube kid.

Strange car-acters

Small cars will surely help in the transportation of the future. But they will create problems in the future employment market. Why then are car firms all over the world beginning to use robot controlled plants? Because, it enables the production of several models simultaneously. Also, if robots are used 70 per cent fewer workers will be needed. Robots can be ordered around without the fears of the labour unions breathing down the necks of the management. Moreover, robots are less susceptible to dangers of welding. Already in Longbridge, Birmingham robots have been welcomed in and they have been working miracles. Imagine a car body being welded every 42 seconds.

Ford in the USA has yet to install robots; on the other hand in the Nissan company in Japan 45 variations are being turned out on two models. Whoever said 1984 is far away. It is no longer on the doorsteps...

Violently in love

Love finds a way. Indeed! But so does marriage, or so it seems. Recently, in Bogota, Columbia, 17 foreign diplomats held hostage at the Dominican Republic embassy, since February 17, witnessed the marriage of a terrorist leader, while waiting for their release. The bride, another terrorist, in charge of the negotiations with the

Columbian Government, it seems makes very successful marriage negotiations too. The marriage occurred on April 19 and the nuptial rites were performed by the Papal Nuncio who was one of the captives. On April 27, the newly-weds left for Havana, (presumably for their honeymoon). They have company though: all 17 hostages!

Box of money

'Larry, are you there? Come November and I'm gonna fight you', said the loudmouthed ambassador extraordinary, Muhammad Ali. In a recent Press conference the three times world heavyweight boxing champ announced about his bout with the World Boxing Association's heavyweight champion, Larry Holmes, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Whether he wins or loses, Muhammad Ali will surely make a lot of money—the title bout is a history making \$10 million one. And we will wait and see whether November 7 is going to be a lucky day

Sun I Malhotra



Muhammad Ali during his visit

Case for the Oscar

So *Kramer vs Kramer* was a well-fought out case. Naturally, for Dustin Hoffman cornered the best actor award for the film. For many distraught Americans, especially the divorced and the separated, the hero of *Kramer* is indeed a hot favourite. It reveals, perhaps, that the birds of the same feather are wont to fly together. The film has also won five major prizes in the 52nd Academy Awards function. Apparently, the 42-year-old Dustin Hoffman chooses his films with discretion; he is believed to choose one film assignment a year.

Dustin Hoffman



Mission impossible

Carter failed again



Charred bodies and wreckage of the disastrous American rescue mission to Tehran

"ISLAM is victorious" shouted jubilant Iranians who came out on the streets to celebrate the failure of the American raid on Iran to rescue the hostages. In a sense they were right. Clearly God saved them. Even before the Iranian defence forces knew what had happened, the American raiders had come in, failed and gone back. It was a classic case of bungling by the USA and the fallout was severe: Cyrus Vance resigned, the USA's allies were dismayed, and the American image continued to its downhill journey. Even Israel was laughing. It was a gamble of course; Carter clearly meant to break the impasse over the hostages with an Entebbe style rescue which would be applauded all over the world, and coincidentally ensure his return to the White House in November. The surprise was not that the gamble failed, but that American inefficiency was the cause of the failure. The Iranians simply never came into the picture at all during the whole operation.

Operation 'Blue Light' went into action on April 25. Within hours it ended in a "courageous" but complete disaster in which eight Americans died, six helicopters were abandoned and a giant Hercules transport plane was completely destroyed in a fire in the Iranian desert. The total task force involved 90 Americans, most of whom had volunteered from the armed forces. The planning for it had begun soon after the American diplo-

mats had been imprisoned in Tehran on November 4, 1979.

The operation involved Farsi-speaking camouflaged US troops landing in the remote Dasht-i-Karim desert area by helicopter about 300 miles south-east of Tehran. The helicopters were to be refuelled at this point by bigger American cargo planes. Bearing commandos, they would then move to the second stage, nearer the outskirts of Tehran where the rescue troops would await darkness to carry out their mission. Using pre-positioned vehicles they were to dash into Tehran armed with incapacitating gases to storm the US embassy, free the hostages and await rescue by helicopters. The hostages would be flown to another place from where they would be taken away to home and safety by long range helicopters. This was the plan. But as President Carter told the American people some hours after the failure of the mission: "I knew the operation was certain to be difficult and it was certain to be dangerous". In reality it was beset by failures. Out of the eight helicopters for the rescue mission which were meant to fly 500 miles from the US aircraft carrier Nimitz stationed then in the Gulf of Oman, one ran into a sandstorm and was forced to turn back; another ran short of fuel, and a third had mechanical trouble. A minimum of six helicopters were required for the mission, but with three getting incapacitated, the mission

was terminated on the orders of the US President. Meanwhile another helicopter flew into one of the large refuelling planes in the night's darkness. This caused both the aircrafts to burn in which eight US commandos were killed and four others were severely injured.

The raid, predictably, caused an uproar, more so because it was a failure. US senators like the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Frank Church, said, "I don't understand the timing of such a military operation, because our allies were backing up our economic sanctions presumably on the assumption that these would foreclose military action". Senator John Warner of Virginia called for a hearing by the Armed Services Committee: "Now we've (the Americans) played our military card and, in my judgment, there should be no further use of military operations until such time as the Congress is consulted".

The initial Israeli reaction to the raid was cheeky; they put out a statement saying that the American planes had left from Egyptian air bases, and not Israeli ones, thus washing their hands off any involvement and simultaneously implying that they would not have bungled things up so. Ze'ev Schiff, the dean of the Israeli military correspondents was more charitable, if equally patronising. He said: "The same people who managed to put a man on the moon failed in simple technical matters. Clearly this was more than just bad luck".

The reaction in Egypt was more nervous. Anwar Sadat predictably praised the attempt as a humane gesture. The government was however coy about the extent of Egyptian involvement in the raid. Egypt is believed to have helped in the refuelling operations. Reporters questioning people on the streets found them less enthusiastic than their President. Typical reactions were, "Are they going to push us into a war over the Shah?" "Why didn't Carter keep the Shah in his own country or send him back to Iran?" And Sadat's problems with militant Egyptian Muslims can only grow after this.

The American people were not ready to condemn Carter for the raid. A quick Gallup poll after the failure showed that 71 per cent felt that Carter was right in trying to rescue the hostages with an armed raid. And 43 per cent felt that the mission's failure would make no difference to the time it would take to secure the release of the hostages. The 43 per cent could be very right.

The consequences of the abortive rescue bid could be far reaching. In USA, Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, resigned in protest over the President's decision of resorting to armed force. In fact, Mr Vance, submitted his resignation when he came to know of the rescue attempt. Most

of the USA's European allies were surprised over the armed attempt since the Carter administration had promised to stay away from military action till the effectiveness of the EEC diplomatic and economic sanctions against Iran could be tested. According to most of the European Governments the American administration is believed to have shown a total lack of comprehension of the "wider global issues at stake in Iran".

While there were criticisms directed against the American President, to the Iranians the fiasco was a great help.

The hostages have been shifted to Qom and Tabriz, to make the task of another US task force harder. The futile rescue bid has strengthened the hold of Khomeini. To the commoners, Imam Khomeini has scored a major victory over America. Many with revolutionary backgrounds and they are among the Iranian intelli-

gentia, are of the opinion that the hostages affair has been badly handled by the all-powerful religious men of Iran. Masud Rajavi, the influential leader of the Mojahadeen e-Khalq in an interview said: "All the Shah's bullets, truncheons and handcuffs, all his torturers were American. But if we were in charge of the hostages, we would use them for a symbolic trial of America, not of the hostages themselves. The real battle is political and economic". But the American action has only alienated the moderates in Iran even more. So it was hardly surprising that the slogan shouted by the demonstrators was: "If you are not with us, you must be against us and with the great Satan". For the religious leaders of Iran, another 'giant step against American imperialism' had been taken, and it came at a time when they most needed it most.

TIRTHANKAR GHOSH

More about the mystery

Poornima was not the end

WAS Poornima Singh, 27-year-old wife of a Punjab police officer who fell mysteriously to her death (see SUNDAY, April 13) from the Curzon Road apartments in the capital at midnight a few weeks back, raped before she died?

Although the Delhi Police have tried their best to hush up details of the case and produced an autopsy report which declares that "nothing abnormal" was found in the rests on Poornima Singh's clothes and in her viscera, there is more than meets the eye in the case.

According to a source in the Central Forensic Science Laboratory which did the autopsy report, the clothes of Poornima Singh were heavily stained with semen. There were also scratches and abrasions on her underbelly and thighs which suggest that she was sexually assaulted. Bruises on her face and other parts of her body also indicate that she put up a fierce scuffle before being molested. All these were brought to the notice of the police by the laboratory staff although, funny these were not mentioned in the autopsy report.

There is further incriminating evidence given by the Curzon Road apartments *chowkidar* who found the body of Poornima Singh. According to the *chowkidar*, Lakhan Singh Poornima's salwar pajamas were undone and pulled down to her knees when her body was found. He said that her kameez was also torn badly and there were bruises on her breasts. "I pulled up the salwar so that her body is not exposed to the public", said Lakhan Singh.

The fact that Poornima's salwar

pajama was undone, was mentioned in the report of the Yashpal Kapoor-controlled *National Herald*. The report, which gave the most details of the incident and implied that Poornima's death may not be a simple case of suicide, was filed by a lady reporter but her information was gleaned from a senior manager of the paper who lived in the Curzon Road apartments. The manager who for reasons best known to himself, decided to play up the story and even rang up the *Herald* photographer just after the incident took place after midnight to come to the spot and take photographs. It was too late for this, however, since the paper had already gone to press.

The next day, the manager contacted the new lady reporter on the job and gave her details of the story. The story was prominently displayed on the front page of the *Herald* the next day. When the *Herald* story came to the notice of Indira Congress high-ups there was a furore, and Yashpal Kapoor was pulled up for publicising a story which was patently embarrassing for the Congress (I). The *Herald* played down the story after the first day's report. Interestingly, the lady reporter was sacked by the management a few days later. The manager, who is extremely powerful in the organisation, was, however, retained.

The police, meanwhile have blacked out all news of the Poornima case and now claim that it was nothing more than an ordinary suicide. To prove this, the autopsy report goes to the extent of even denying that there was liquor found in her viscera. This in spite of the fact that according to all reports including an interview given by Garcha to a newsmagazine, Poornima was drinking heavily throughout the day as

well as the evening on which she died. The police also deny reports of the peculiar triangular relationship between Devendra Singh Garcha, Poornima Singh and Balbir Singh. According to many sources, including members of the Punjab Congress (I), Poornima Singh was in love with Garcha. When Garcha had got tired of her, he tried to "pass her over" to Balbir Singh. The quarrel between Garcha and Poornima on the night of her death was reportedly over an attempt by Garcha to persuade the girl to spend the night with Balbir Singh.

Interestingly, Balbir Singh has been lying low and has not been heard of at all in reports of the case, although his involvement in the death of Poornima is definitely as deep as Garcha's. Inquiries among his friends and colleagues in the Punjab Congress (I) revealed that Balbir Singh was fond of a quick-paced life and drinking. He is also known to get very aggressive after a couple of drinks. The other intriguing aspect of the case for which the police has no answers, is the fact that circumstantial evidence is mounted heavily against the police theory that Poornima Singh jumped to her death from the eighth floor.

A private investigator who claims he has proof that Poornima Singh was first taken by Garcha and Balbir Singh on the night of her death to a flat on the fourth floor in the Curzon Road apartments, is reportedly blackmailing Garcha with this information. Garcha has denied all these reports point-blank and is trying to bluster through the scandal. He is yet to answer the show cause notice issued to him by the Congress (I) and his statement that he had resigned from the Lok Sabha was found to be false since the Lok Sabha secretariat has not received any such intimation so far.

As if this were not enough, hardly two weeks after the death of Poornima Singh, Garcha was involved in yet another controversial incident again with a woman and incredibly at the same Curzon Road apartments. According to the *chowkidar* at the apartments and eyewitnesses, around 11 pm on April 14, a Fiat that drove in from the direction of India gate swung suddenly to the right and an Ambassador coming from behind rammed into it. The occupants of the car were a Sikh and a middle-aged woman. The Sikh got out of the car, put a hand to his forehead, and cried: "Oh god, help me." The woman who was evidently hurt, and was hunched across the car seat, moaned "Darling, darling." On closer inspection, the *chowkidars* and residents of the apartments who had crowded around the accident spot recognised the Sikh as none other than Devendra Singh Garcha. There was an immediate furore. The men in the crowd looked at him belligerently while the women beat a hasty retreat. A woman resident of the apartments later recalled, "as soon as I saw who the man was, I immediately took my young daughter

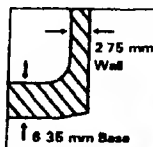


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by the hand and fled to my room which I locked."

Garcha was keen on driving off but the *chowkidars* would not let him get in the car. He was forced to leave his car behind and take the woman to hospital in a taxi. The woman was later identified as a 40-year-old Doordarshan producer, Bhakti Prabha, who was a resident of the Curzon Road apartments. Interestingly, Prabha was the producer who showed a documentary on Mrs Gandhi during the Janata rule over which the slogan "Indira Gandhi ki jai" was audible. She was transferred to Jullundur by the Doordarshan management for this lapse. After

Mrs Gandhi came back to power, she was transferred back, reportedly, at the instance of Garcha.

According to Garcha, he was escorting Prabha back to her apartments after taking her out in the evening. They had spent a couple of hours in a room at Western Court and then gone to India Gate for ice-cream. Garcha put the blame for the accident on the driver of the Ambassador car who abandoned his vehicle and fled. The police later arrested and identified him as Satya Prakash, a 32-year-old Connaught Place mechanic. He was remanded by the Magistrate to judicial custody for 14 days. This despite eyewitness

accounts that it was Garcha's fault since he had suddenly lurched to the right without giving any signal. Secondly, a bottle of whisky and one of gin, as well as a couple of glasses were found inside Garcha's Fiat. No breathalyser test was done on him. Instead, the poor Ambassador driver, who obviously did not have either the contacts or the money to defend himself has been remanded to 14 days' judicial custody on charges of rash and negligent driving — a penalty which is quite unprecedented in such accident cases.

AJOY BOSE, New Delhi

Revolt against Mrs. Gandhi

Again, Mr Bahuguna starts things

"WHO cares for me? Not even reporters took note of me." After three and a half months of trying to become important within the Congress (I), Mr H. N. Bahuguna, who considers himself one of the architects of the Congress (I) victory in January, finally accepted that he was a nobody in the Party he joined just previous to the parliamentary elections. On May 2, Mr Bahuguna finally realised that Mrs Gandhi and Mr Sanjay Gandhi certainly did not care for him. May 2 was the last day for filing of nominations for the Assembly polls, and when the results of the closed-door decision-making became known, Mr Bahuguna found that his followers had been ignored. Most of the tickets had gone to Sanjay Gandhi's faithful; the "new image Congress (I)" had no place for men like Mr Bahuguna. And so on May 2, Mr Bahuguna resigned from his terribly important-sounding Party posts: secretary-general of the Congress (I) and member of its parliamentary board.

Mr Bahuguna had been given these posts in return for joining the Party on the eve of the last elections. In the first flush of victory in January Mr Bahuguna thought that not merely would he be an important adviser on Party matters, but that he would also be rewarded with an important ministry—one at least as important as the finance portfolio he held under Charan Singh. Soon, Mr Bahuguna discovered that not merely was he not getting anywhere in the ministry stakes, but also that his Party positions were decorative. He had all the trappings: the letterhead, the office in the AICC building in Delhi. But no power. Which was particularly embarrassing when he had to face his supporters, who thought that now that they had brought Mrs Gandhi

to power, they too should get a few of the crumbs of office.

But Mr Bahuguna attended only one meeting of the Congress parliamentary board during all these days. And when the time came for the selection of candidates for the Assembly elections, Mr Bahuguna found that nobody was interested in consulting him. However, like a true oldtimer, Mr Bahuguna did not completely waste his time during his days out in the cold. He kept sending letters to Mrs Gandhi—letters on issues. While his file of the correspondence he sent kept building up, there was no response from Mrs Gandhi's side.

Then Mr Bahuguna, on his periodic tours through Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere, kept making speeches against the personality cult, and promoting the Mahatma Gandhi-Nehru line (as against the latest official requirement—to promote the Indira Gandhi-Sanjay Gandhi line). In the meanwhile, one of his followers, a member of the Rajya Sabha, wrote a stiff letter to Mrs Gandhi herself saying that the old CPD people who had joined her could not be ignored so arbitrarily. And a well-known great friend of Mr Bahuguna's, the Shahi Imam, suddenly started shouting against Sanjay Gandhi that his friend Narayan Things were falling into place: it was clear that it would be only a matter of time before Mr Bahuguna left the Congress (I). Then Mr Bahuguna suggested to Mrs Gandhi that his friend Narayan Singh be inducted into the panel selecting candidates for the UP Assembly elections. This too was not done. And when the UP list became known, Mr Bahuguna finally accepted what he should have realised a long while ago: he was not wanted in the Congress (I). His use was over; and now he had been discarded like a dirty

rag.

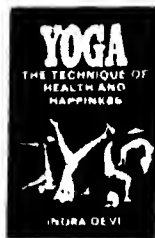
The interesting thing is that Mr Bahuguna is not the only senior leader from Uttar Pradesh to be so ignored. Others, who have shown far more constancy to Mrs Gandhi than Mr Bahuguna has done, were treated similarly. Kamalapati Tripathi, the pandit from Varanasi, resisted all the temptations after the defeat of 1977 to leave Mrs Gandhi and join the non-Mrs Gandhi Congress. But he remained loyal through all the twists and turns of Congress and national politics. And in return for such faith, his son Lokpathi Tripathi, it is said, had even begun seeing himself as the next Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. But the same Kamalapati Tripathi resigned from the panel selecting candidates for UP, in sheer disgust. His followers were getting nowhere. Mrs Mohsina Kidwai's victory in the Azamgarh parliamentary by-election launched Mrs Gandhi on the road back to power. Narain Dutt Tewari became famous during the Emergency for his flattery of Sanjay Gandhi. Both Mrs Kidwai and Mr Tewari are said to be feeling uncomfortable.

"I do not want to be a burden or an unwanted guest," said Mr Bahuguna just after resigning from the Party posts. How many more unwanted guests are there in the Congress (I)?

But Mrs Gandhi has faced revolts before, and faced them very successfully indeed. The simple truth about the Congress (I) is that the (I) is far more important than the Congress. The people either vote for Mrs Gandhi or they don't. Even if there is resentment within the Party can it really hurt Mrs Gandhi very much? And even if her Party's leaders in UP are unhappy, as is being alleged, can they make one iota of difference to the results of the Assembly polls?

M.J. AKBAR, Delhi

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NOTES

BACK in New Delhi after a six-week gap; and once again the story there sounds like an old, old tale gone more putrid with each telling. The week beginning April 22 marked the seven days when "tickets" were being distributed by the various parties for the nine Assembly elections to be held by the end of May, and often it seemed as if all the scum of the earth had descended on this already burdened with more than its share of scum. The seekers of power came in all shapes, sizes, colours, tongues, each one buoyed by his or her personal fantasy, willing to barter anything, particularly self-respect, in return for that nod which would presumably guarantee the recipient entry into that small world of the powerful.

The real crowds were in the Congress (I) camp. Everyone seems to believe that a Congress (I) nomination is the passport to permanent glory, and its attendant rewards. The politicians handing out Congress (I) tickets were under virtual siege from the mobs whose lust for membership of the Assembly has taken them far beyond anything vaguely akin to civilised behaviour. And in this depressing marketplace, quite expectedly, frauds are having a great time. Crooks claiming connections with either Mrs Gandhi or her powerful son are eating, drinking and womanising at the expense of this vast array of aspirants. Some of the aspirants seem to have brought along bed-dable women to help their case along. While there is madness in the Congress (I) camp, and there are a reasonable number of people asking for the Lok Dal ticket (a glance at the lawn in front of Chandrajit Yadav's modest residence is evidence of this), there is only silence around the houses of the Janata leaders. What a change from May 1977!

ONE Congress leader who was trying to inject some method in the madness was Vidy Charan Shukla. The day, April 26. The time, one in the afternoon. A blazing Delhi sun easily piercing the tenuous defence of the trees and the shamiana proved totally ineffective with the massed crowd of Madhya Pradesh who saw V. C. Shukla as their conduit to the inner sanctum where the matters of life and death (like the nomination for an Assembly seat) were being decided. Eyes hungrier than a poor man's stomach, they clutched sheets (bad typing on blue carbon) describing their personal virtues and thrust it towards The Leader. The Leader de-

cided that the confusion was too confusing. So he asked everyone to form a queue. And that was how V. C. Shukla (wearing a small badge with a printed portrait of Mrs Gandhi on his khadi covered chest) met his followers: the aspirations filed past, one by one...

DELHI'S vibrant, energetic, well-informed gossip circuit is alive with stories of one Cabinet Minister, P. C. Sethi. There seem to be serious doubts about Mr Sethi's sanity; he is said to have done the most absurd things during his current spell in power. The latest story going the rounds is that he told the Prime Minister that he was fond of whisky during the day, and brandy at night. The Prime Minister, not at all used to hearing such selfappreciation from her Cabinet Minister, apparently replied that if such was the case, Mr Sethi might have to choose between his whisky and his ministry, and which would he prefer to give up? Mr Sethi seems to have replied that if he had to choose between whisky and ministership, he would keep his whisky and give up his ministership. Well, actually, bravo! Heaven knows if this story is apocryphal or true, but Mr Sethi's curious activities certainly are giving rise to a great deal of merriment in the capital.

A traditional status symbol among the Congress leaders has been the size of the shamianas outside their huge bungalows; the crowds signify not merely the leader's ability to collect a flock, but also indicate his clout with the ruling family—after all, people are only coming to a particular leader because he can get something done. Nothing depresses a Congress leader more than the absence of favour-seekers around his house. Well, in 1980, another status symbol has entered the syndrome: the number of ice-cream vendors outside a bungalow. After all, any leader can hire a shamiana and rent a bit of a crowd to indicate to the world that he is not totally unwanted. But the ice-cream vendor, needing to sell, will only come if there is genuine business. Meaning—legitimate seekers of power with money in their pockets, and not only chamchas w' will eat the leader's food and live in the bungalow.

ONE Janata leader to a Lok Dal leader, when discussing Mr S. L. Shakkher's decisions denying both the Janata Party and the Lok Dal the symbols they had used in the last elections: "I think we should apply for the owl as our common symbols. The ullu would be the best representative of our parties". Much laughter.

M. J. AKBAR

A short note on a familiar story

A NY self-respecting Indian who hopes that India's prestige as a nation has been restored by Mrs Gandhi's return to power, might have been interested by the audience's responses at two recent meetings I have attended. One was held by the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London. The other was in Heidelberg in West Germany, where the Gandhi Peace Foundation had convened a conference on the Indian elections.

The first was attended by diplomats—including a silent and uneasy Indian from the Indian High Commission in London—businessmen, members of Parliament, academics and Pressmen; the second by academics, politicians, and local citizens of the small German city in the Rhine Valley. At both there was a common response to the first signs that India was returning along the dire and destructive path it had travelled from 1975 to 1977.

It was a response of foreboding, in a sombre silence. Certainly, if I was in charge of India's industrial and economic development, I would not be expecting any rush of investment from the businessmen and multinational directors sitting in that London audience. And, if I was India's Minister for External Affairs, I would have been daunted by the evident lack of enthusiasm for the prospects facing India under the Gandhis, which was written so clearly upon the diplomats' faces.

At the German meeting, as in London, the widespread knowledge in the West of what happened in India last time, served to prevent any credulity about an India allegedly now restored to political and economic health and well-being. Even the ordinary German citizens who attended—and with their own experience of dictatorship to guide them—drew in their breaths with astonishment at the blatancy of Mrs Gandhi's recent propaganda; at the imminence—now come to pass—of toppling of state Governments; and at the whole wretched business of India's return into political darkness.

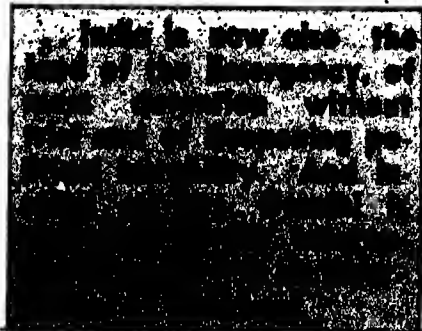
The explosion of appalled laughter which greeted the news of Mrs Gandhi's description of the events at Narainpur in UP as "the worst atrocity since Independence" would not have amused Indians who love their country; and who are still able to feel ashamed whenever its leaders' inability to tell the truth brings their humiliated nation to its knees, in the eyes of others. As for Mrs Gandhi's recent praise of the life of Jayaprakash Narayan—the man whose life was effectively ended in her hands—

By DAVID SELBOURNE

as "a source of inspiration for the political and social workers of India", it was greeted with the shocked silence reserved for something beneath contempt, and beyond derision.

These were small events, but important ones nonetheless. For they were a barometer of opinion, and opinion not swayed by the populist emotions of India; opinion from a distance, but a distance which lends perspective to judgment. Moreover, these were responses which crossed a wide political spectrum. After all, there were both Russian and American diplomats in the London audiences, and ordinary passers-by in the German one, and no one at all spoke out in defence of the new regime, during the long periods of discussion in public and in private; not even the representatives of the Indian High Commission. For the truth, which will be unwelcome to many, is that Mrs Gandhi—despite her electoral victory—possesses little political credit outside India.

A ND now that the state Governments have been dismissed, both the friends and foes of India can only sit and watch, as the Indian political system moves towards another bout of self-destruction. This time, the feeling here appears to be less one of militant alarm for India's freedoms (such as they are) than a



bemused astonishment that a country as great as India should be unable to find leaders who are worthy of the power entrusted to them.

It is also significant that there are few who regard India's present situation as likely to be long-lasting; while it is now plain to many that an attempt at subversive blood-letting in West Bengal, for instance, would have much wider political repercussions this time than it had in the early Seventies. Indeed, as the whole of the subcontinent slips into the turmoil of superpower rivalry (of which the trouble in N. E. India is an instance), India seems no more likely

to withstand the coming stresses under its present leadership than the Pakistan of General Zia.

In fact, it may be shocking news to Indian readers that, as far as I can observe, there are no longer any substantial moral distinctions being made in Europe between the quality of rule in Pakistan and India. To Western perceptions—which, in this matter, are as capable of being right as of being wrong—there is not much to choose in prospects for stability, respect for democratic norms, and political integrity between the two forms of regime.

Equally important for those who were looking forward, only a few heady weeks ago, to a revived economy and a booming stock exchange after the dismissal of the Janata, there are not many—if any—who will now put money on either Pakistan or India as a stable political or economic haven for the future. I would guess that this is just as true of Soviet as of Western perceptions about where India is now going or going again, rather.

Moreover, thanks to the increased knowledge in the West of the real nature of India's political processes, the fact that Mrs Gandhi came to power with a small minority of India's electorate on her side—less than one in four of those entitled to vote voted for the Congress (I)—is quite widely known in the West. The "massive majority" she is falsely supposed to have gained in India is thus no longer capable of creating the same degree of illusion outside India as it once might have done; when interest in India was confined to the lakes of Kashmir, and the music of Ravi Shankar.

For India is now also the land of the Emergency, of mass detention without trial and of deepening political instability. And insofar as Mrs Gandhi is perceived as the incarnation of India, it is an incarnation not of strength, but of weakness; not of dignity and power, but of frailty and disorder. In one respect, this awareness is one of the true "gains of the Emergency" between 1975 and 1977; in another, it bodes ill for India.

It means that in the coming period, as India's political system is once again rocked to its foundations, and the rights of its people are once again eroded "in the national interest", the rest of the world's vigilance will increase the paranoia of India's leaders. And this in turn can only mean that more scapegoats will eventually have to be found for political failure. It is an unwelcome prospect; and two widely different audiences, thousands of miles from India in London and West Germany, were both clearly aware of it.

EXTRACTS

I WILL never forget one incident of that first visit with Sophia. My wife and two little daughters and I were staying at L'Heho Cabala, a Roman orgiastic-looking, but quite sedate, resort complex high on a hill above the Villa Ponti and the town of Marino. With sauna, masseur, boutique, fully equipped bungalows, tiny hotel rooms with antique furnishings and rustic ceilings on which to hit your head, narrow moss-grown staircases, nightly dancing and day-and-night swimming on an immense terrace overlooking Alban hills and Trascatti vineyards (and the Villa Ponti, which may be why Sophia's husband had bought into the inn, to keep out paparazzi), Heho Cabala—the name is a Greek and Roman co-production which could be translated as "secret cult of the sun"—reminded me somehow of a Club Med romance bunt for Peter Ustinov as the Emperor Nero in *Quo Vadis*. Be that as it may, Heho Cabala catered to the family trade, and its English-language brochure spelled this out in no uncertain terms, though perhaps a little imprecision in translation. "If it is rest and entertainment you seek, you will find them here, for this village is both a hotel and a 'holiday-village' (without noise, overcrowding and promiscuity)." Two double rooms, with Continental breakfasts, in those pre-devaluation-of-the-dollar days, had cost us a total of just under twenty-five dollars a night. Sophia had made



reservations for us and, though there was no discount for friends of the co-owners, she had eased my financial burden and spiced our visit by inviting my family to lunch at her Villa a couple of times during our week at Heho Cabala.

Friends in Prague, Czechoslovakia, where we lived then, had asked my three ladies—only half jokingly—if they were coming along to cnaperone me. Actually, however, our four-year-old had, just that May, undergone delicate urological surgery by the most noted doctor with the only suitable instrument (made in America) in all of Czechoslovakia. After two weeks in the hospital, she was recuperating nicely. But meteorologically as well as politically, Prague was such a gloomy place in that post-Dubcek Spring of 1969 that when our eminent surgeon heard where I was going, he promptly prescribed "a week in sunny Italy" for all four of us—and asked for an autographed picture of our hostess. Just in case anything went wrong on the trip and we needed medical attention for our daughter, her great and devoted doctor, who had been educated in the West, dropped a note to a former classmate of his, now in Rome, describing our child's case history.

One noon, while the four of us were down the hill at Sophia's, a call came for me from Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's nearby residence. Suitably impressed, Heho Cabala immediately referred Sophia's unlisted number: a cardinal sin under most circumstances,

The real Sophia

These extracts are from the book. "Forever, Sophia"—an intimate portrait of the famous filmstar, Sophia Loren, by ALAN LEVY. The book is distributed by B. I. Publications.

but not when you think it's Paul VI calling. Sophia took the call herself and, with utter awe, told me: "It's—it's Castel Gandolfo—for you."

"My God! The Pope?" I whispered.

"No," she said, putting her hand over the mouthpiece as she passed the receiver to me. "But I happen to know the name. He's the Pope's personal physician." For that was what had become of our surgeon's urological classmate, who was just calling to greet us and make sure all was well. When I hung up, Sophia was still regarding me with her mouth open.

"It's not every day one gets a call from Castel Gandolfo?" I hazarded a guess.

"No," she said ruefully, "and for me from that doctor, never. But there was a time when I would have given anything for that call."

When Sophia had been having miscarriages, she had been told at one point that this was the one man in Italy who could help her. But he wouldn't give her an appointment because her trouble with the Vatican over her husband's divorce from his first wife might have compromised the doctor had he taken her as a patient. Not in Sophia's matter-of-fact account of this, but in the way she reacted to his name (as though she wanted my autograph because I was somehow connected to him), did I perceive a little of what those frustrating years of concubinage and childlessness must have meant to that tenacious woman.

Sophia now calls herself a casual Catholic: "Yes, Carlo and I are still Catholics, even though I don't go to church, don't go to Mass, don't take communion, don't confess myself. But I was raised a Catholic, I believe in God, and pray when I need help." She bears, in fact, no hard feelings toward the Vatican for the difficulties it put in her way toward becoming Mrs. Ponti. "After all," she says,



"the church has a very good side. Many people don't know anywhere to take their problems, except to the priest. Otherwise, they'd dope themselves with drinks or drugs or do something worse to themselves or others. A priest is the only means of support in many people's lives and I'm all for this."

The Church has never been that kind to Sophia. Even under the relatively brief but benign Papacy of John XXIII, there was trouble when, no Italian Government official would present Sophia with her Oscar for *Two Women* because of Vatican pressure. Small wonder, then, that Ponti—a man who, like many of us, takes slights to one he loves even more bitterly than the victim does—has been engaged in a running feud with the Vatican for years. Pius XII's niece, an Italian countess, sued Ponti, Mastroianni, and Richard Burton for the way their film, *Death in Rome*, depicted her uncle's conduct in World War II. And when Ponti announced in the mid-1960s that Sophia would play Mother Cabrini, and when he described America's first saint as "a nun (who's) in love with God" and went on to suggest that between sisters and Saviour "the love affair has lasted two thousand years," he was asking for trouble. The Mother Superior of Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania, denounced Sophia as "the worst possible choice to portray a holy woman"—and there were so many other protests and boycott threats that the film never was made.

The ultimate outrage (and under the circumstances it is something of a miracle that the Pontis have not been excommunicated) came in early 1970 when, just as soon as De Sica's droopy *Sunflower* was in the can ("A nasco in three acts," said Stefan Kanfer in *Time*), Ponti put Mastroianni and Loren to work for director Dino Risi making *The Priest's Wife*





—and, to spice the provocation further, hired Pope Paul VI's former cook, Armando Carzanita, to play a chef in the film.

The Priest's Wife made middling fun, but much controversy. It was a domestic comedy about a miniskirted pop singer named Valeria (Sophia) who is saved from suicide by Don Mario (Marcello), a priest with a bedside manner who winds up fathering her child, winning a promotion to study within the Vatican itself and acting upon higher ecclesiastical counsel, persuading his expectant fiancée that, while he is already married to the Church, she can live happily ever after as his mistress.

Filming this story in Catholic Italy with Vatican opposition ran more risks than any American layman could imagine. One day, a couple of priests forced their way onto the set by invoking their right to check out the authenticity of any scene which had a church building in the background. As it happened, that was the day when Sophia, in miniskirt, and Marcello, in priest's robes, were supposed to play a love scene, which she and he and director Risi knew would raise the clerics' hackles. So they set up a church sequence they had planned to film later in the day, assembled some extras who were already in costume and, always asking the priests' advice about details, filmed Father Mastroianni celebrating Mass and leaving the church in only slightly unseemly haste. This take was filmed six times, with the two

visitors watching impassively but unprotestingly—little knowing that each time Marcello made his exit he jogged to the next set, where Sophia and a second camera unit were waiting. Greeting her with a hug and a lover's kiss, made more soulful by arriving out of breath, Marcello and Sophia made their hurried embrace into one of the more effective and economical scenes in *The Priest's Wife*. The solution, Mastroianni and Risi insisted, came from Sophia, who admits only that "it was the devil in all of us."

One of the few journalists allowed on the set of *The Priest's Wife* was Nino Lo Bello, whose 1969 best-seller, *The Vatican Empire*, had detailed the Roman Catholic Church's immense wealth and real-estate holdings, including (through the Vatican owned Societa Generale Immobiliare) a controlling interest in Washington's Watergate complex. Lo Bello asked Sophia how she reconciled her Catholic faith with her disobedience to Vatican teaching.

"The conflict is painful," she admitted. "But I must act according to my conscience. And we are not making a picture against the church. We are posing a problem that you know and I know is common these days: we read about it every week. And it's a problem the church will have to face and solve like all the others: if not in the next ten years, then maybe twenty, maybe fifty."

"Personally, I always like to think of a priest as a human being. And

he should experience all the problems every human being has. That's why, for me at least, I think a priest should get married and have a family. Only by being married, having the wife and the children to care for every day, can he begin to understand other people's problems much, much better. He should really suffer as we all do—practically, not theoretically.

Her husband—as is usual where the church is concerned—spoke bluntly and more abrasively. "When Italian priests say they want to get married," Ponti told Lo Bello, "it is not for sexual reasons, I'm sure, because many have girlfriends on the side."

Despite sporadic bans, many denunciations, and mixed notices, *The Priest's Wife* flourished at box offices around the world and was even shown in Italy with only two scenes deleted. A few months later, however, Sophia went to work making *White Sister* a tender Italian love story of a nursing nun and a convalescent communist, played by pop singer Adriano Celentano and directed by Alberto Lattuada, Fellini's onetime co-director (*Variety Lights*).

Though blessed with an utterly convincing and ingratiating performance by Sophia in the title role, the gently irresistible *White Sister* took two years to cross the Atlantic and encountered resistance at the ticket windows from a public that could accept Sophia as a priest's wife, but not as a nun and perhaps never as Mother Cabrini.

WITH the microphones today and the reverberations you can get with mechanical things, you just have to talk and it sounds like you're singing," Sophia marveled not long after she sang *The Secrets of Rome* for a TV special on "Sophia Loren in Rome." She and Peter Sellers also recorded an album of nonsense songs when they were making *The Millionaire*; according to Sophia, "it sold three hundred thousand copies in England."

Nevertheless, when she was signed to play the tricky musical lead in *Man of La Mancha* as Aldonza, the kitchen slut Don Quixote mistakes for his "sweet lady and fair virgin" Dulcinea, Sophia took nearly two months of lessons and coaching just to learn her four songs: *Aldonza, Dulcinea, It's All the Same* ("One pair of arms is like another") and, of course, *The Impossible Dream*. Meanwhile, writers were being hired and fired, director Peter Glenville was replaced by Arthur Hiller, there were tantrums and tie-ups by the Italian technicians, and Sophia and her costar, Peter O'Toole, were thrown onto their own resources during the chaotic filming in Rome.

Sophia's approach was to rise above herself, treating her vehicle as though it were a screen test or audition upon which everything depended: "This is a challenge. I have never appeared in such a musical before. I sing a little, but I don't even know yet whether they will use



my voice...I hope I can do it, as it's very personal to me: to tell something by singing, to portray emotions in a song, this is a very beautiful thing."

O'Toole, on the other hand, gave up early. He pronounced his own lyrics "miserable" and some of Sophia's "true tripe", sleepwalked through his dual role of Miguel de Cervantes and Don Quixote de la Mancha "hoping for the best," and concentrated upon carousing without and conversing with his co-star. He called her "Scicolone" and told the world "I love that cow!" which somehow didn't offend her half as much as Sinatra's calling her a "broad." In a more reflective interview O'Toole informed Donald Zec: "My first impression was of a well turned-out, extremely skillful piece of machinery. It was much later, when we began to work together, that I could see her for what she was. No crap, no artifice—just an extraordinary, sexually attractive lady."

When asked how Sophia's sex appeal worked on him, O'Toole replied: "Listen, there's so much of it there, who could ignore it? But it was not that bloody cliché of my falling in love with her. Just a straightforward, enormous sexual attraction."

Man of La Mancha was the most violent screen musical since *West Side Story*. In a crucial scene Quixote and Sancho Panza rescue Aldonza from a band of lusty muleteers and then the Don insists no-

bility demands that he go to his enemies to "raise them up and minister to their wounds." Touched by his idealism and declaring that they were her enemies, too, Aldonza refuses to let the old man wash their wounds but goes to tend them herself. While she is doing so, one of her patients clamps his arms and legs about her, precipitating a gang rape with whipping.

Sophia refused to let a stunt woman take her lumps for her and she defended herself so ably that, according to O'Toole "she punched and kicked everybody at least once, and I can tell you she kneed more than one of those bums in orchestras." Orchestra seats are called *stalls* in Britain and, in this case, *orchestras* is rhyming slang for balls.

That particular scene had another consequence later, that Sophia hadn't anticipated. At the age of three, her son Cipi had begun to notice that his mother was different from all other mothers and was asking "how" as well as "why." As part of his education, Sophia took him into the Villa Ponti's posh little cinema and screened the slow-moving, seemingly tame *Sunflower* for him "because he was in it when he was six months old and I wanted him to see himself, too. Just after the scene he was in, though, came a very powerful scene on a train where I screamed and threw myself on the floor." Cipi sat rigid, said nothing and had nightmares for many a moon. Sophia

vowed "no more of my movies for my son until he's older and can understand it's only make-believe," but, in the first flush of enthusiasm for *La Mancha*—already thinking of it as a musical version of a classic children like, and forgetting its many scary moments—she made "the big mistake" of inviting Cipi to watch it with her. After the rape scenes, Cipi went rigid again and had a bad night's sleep.

The next morning, however, the first thing Cipi said to Sophia was: "How is Jimmy Coco?"

As Sancho Panza, the rotund Jimmy Coco took a beating or two himself in *La Mancha*. But Cipi was making the effort—a hard one even for a child twice his age—to dissociate performers from their roles. A little later in the day, Cipi told his mother: "Those men who knocked you down; I saw what happened to them! They're all skeletons and you're fine. You're yourself."

No critic could have said more to please Sophia Loren. Having looked at something that disturbed him, her son had found a way to fight back or get over it and get on with life.

Telling me this, Sophia then summed up the *La Mancha* experience thusly: "It was a long, difficult, tiring film to make. Some people still aren't quite sure how the movie ended. But I can tell you it had a very happy ending for me. The day after filming was finished, I found out I was pregnant again." ■

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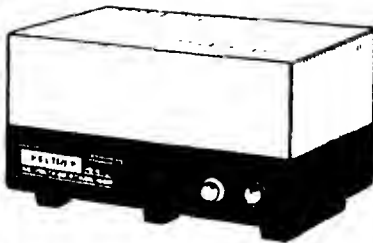
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The right to privacy

Civil Liberties



By A. G. NOORANI

NE hears now and then complaints by politicians of surveillance by policemen in plain clothes hanging outside their homes. But the right to privacy is still in its infancy in Indian law.

It is trite to say that our rights are protected by the Constitution. In a broad sense, it is true, of course. But we are far more dependent than we realise on the march of case law, on trends in judicial reasoning and, indeed, on the accident of litigation, for many a legal right to be precisely defined by the courts.

Only after such a definition can the right be said to be truly and effectively recognised by law. The arrested growth of the Indian citizen's right to privacy proves this.

The Constitution recognises no such right in express terms as some Constitutions do. Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights clearly lays down that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family home or correspondence..."

However, Article 21 of the Constitution does confer on the citizen the fundamental right to "personal liberty". The Supreme Court has ruled that "domiciliary visits" to the homes of suspects by the police at night violate personal liberty and are, therefore, unconstitutional. The Court, however, by a narrow majority of 3-2 upheld a watch on the suspect's movements and ruled that it did not violate the fundamental right, guaranteed by Article 19(1)(d), to freedom of movement within the country.

Do you see the relevance of this 1962 ruling to what happened a little over a decade later? The

practice of surveillance by posting policemen in plain clothes outside the homes of political opponents would not have proceeded with such impunity if the Supreme Court had ruled that police surveillance violates the freedom of movement guaranteed by Article 19(1)(d). As Justice Subba Rao rightly remarked in his dissenting judgment, "How could a movement under the scrutinising gaze of the policemen be described as a free movement? The whole country is his jail. The freedom of movement in clause (d), therefore, must be a movement in a free country; that is, in a country where he can do whatever he likes, speak to whomsoever he wants, meet people of his own choice without any apprehension, subject of course to the law of social control".

In 1975, the Supreme Court ruled that in regard to persons suspected to be habitual criminals, surveillance as well as domiciliary visits, both by day and night, are constitutionally permissible. The Court, however, remarked, "There can be no doubt that privacy-dignity claims deserve to be examined with care and to be denied only when an important countervailing interest is shown to be superior".

The Supreme Court contented itself with the observation: "the right to privacy in any event will necessarily have to go through a process of case-by-case development. Therefore, even assuming that the right to personal liberty, the right to move freely throughout the territory of India and the freedom of speech create an independent right of privacy as an emanation from them, which one can characterise as a fundamental right, we do not think that the right is absolute".

In the five years that have elapsed since these observations were made, the Court's definition of "personal liberty" has widened and so has in its reach the ability to strike down many an administrative wrong. Instead of leaving matters to the uncertainties of litigation, would it not be more appropriate to define the right to privacy by legislation on the lines attempted by some democratic countries?

The legislation, however, must be framed after careful deliberation and in close consultation with the Press. As in other areas of freedom of the Press, a line will have to be drawn between the Press' right, indeed, duty to expose and the individual's right to privacy. That line must not be arbitrarily drawn.

Break-fast device

Dr Sio Pway Khee, a dental surgeon in Calcutta, has successfully invented the "world's best" half-boiled egg-opener. This rare invention is aimed at "introducing to the world's millions, a new concept for modern living and time saving viz: to open half-boiled eggs as how modern, civilised people should: Neat, Even, Clean and Easy". *Microfine Egg Cutter*, in Dr Khee's opinion, is perfect and no further improvement on it is possible, either by the inventor himself or anyone else. The dentist cum inventor claims that quite a few people are using his egg-cutter and are delighted: including inter alia, Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mother Teresa and C.P.N. Singh (Governor of Uttar Pradesh). The invention is a result of Dr. Khee's irritation when he messed up an egg while breaking it.

Fair in the air

Indian Airlines accepted its second woman commercial pilot for training. Prem Mathur was the first to join Indian Airlines. And, upon Saudamini Deshmukh will be soaring high with hundreds on her back.

The Ninety-Nines Inc. — a women's organisation of fliers, launched in 1929 by Amelia Earhart, and now with a membership of 5,000 — has come of age in India. Three pilots, two technicians of Indian Airlines and another of Air Works India along with two women pilots of Bangladesh Biman — Sayeda Rokhsana and Yasmin Rehman — were recently felicitated by the Indian section of Ninety-Nines Inc. in Bombay. None of these young ladies believed that flying needed to be considered an exclusive preserve of men. There are tales of women in the West having joined the Air Force as Marines and as paratroopers.

Take it from him



Mukesh Parpian

Bobby alias AFST alias Talyarkhan, as you choose to call him, is fast becoming one of the major institutions of Bombay. At 81, his fire is neither dimmed nor is his thirst for controversy quenched. AFST still enters the fray of all sporting controversy with the enthusiasm of a man one fourth his age. His "Mark My Word", "Do You Get me, Steve?" and the most common of all, "I Told You So" have grated more ears in authority than have perhaps the combined pens of all other sports-writers in the country. On Friday, April 11, Establishment finally accepted the old rabble-rouser in its midst. An AFST Felicitation Committee held a public function to thank him for his services to sport, as journalist, sportscaster and most of all for—as the chief guest, D. B. Deodhar put it—"his ability to call a spade a spade, his courage of conviction". It was an extremely touching moment. AFST, clearly unused to such emotional scenes, looked disconcerted as Dom Moraes, long-time admirer, read out a poem written as a tribute to him.

*Seen, by the sun, you have your memories
The loose sleeve flaps on
Amarsingh's right arm.*

*The huge bull, Nissar,
the stock Amarnath,
Nayudu who covered the
sky with sizes,
Merchant snarled cuts
away on panther feet
Your voice and pen
erected them like trees
And we who listened to
you and who read
Know them like old trees
now, though some are
dead.
Hazare, Gavaskar, Bedi,
with all*

*You were once
Friends of the sun.
If friends are few,
From my generation and
for others, thank you.*
Dom then presented him with a rare napkin bearing autographs of the legendary 1920 Warwick Armstrong's team and others followed with felicitations. AFST came into his own when he spoke, saying that he had little ambition left: "to drive to London and back in a sports car, and get a little cottage at Mumbra, which was filled with books other than cricket". Finally, when a former Indian cricketer, known for his dusty hitting and wicket-keeping, was greeted by Deodhar as "surely one of Talyarkhan's favourites" our old Bobby retorted, loud enough to fill the room: "Him! Of course not; I couldn't bear the man!" and watched the cricketer squirm.

Theatre in the red

All revolutionaries, said the capitalist cynic, must end up turning into heretics. Although history provides instances to the contrary, the story of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) would seem to prove that revolutionaries turn into rich and famous film actors. Started originally by the Communist Party during the Second World War, IPTA, staged plays that spread the message of Marx. The association gathered momentum during the freedom movement and attracted creative intellectuals of the age — Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Sardar Ali Jafri and Shombhu Mitra—who put up fine performances. Not much later, after independence was won, the IPTA lost all its missionary zeal. The enthusiasts looked for, and found, better pastures in the Hindi film industry. Among those who fell to the bait of commercialism were Dev Anand, Balraj Sahni, Kaifi Azmi, A. K. Hangal and Manmohan Krishan.

The more committed elements in the association led by R. N. Singh, responded by starting the Awami Rangmanch with the vow of continuing with the original Marxist ideology of IPTA. The group, whose present chairman is the noted author Kamleshwar, is now planning what could be a theatrical coup: Zia Sarhadi, the famous Pakistani filmmaker who made *Hum Log* and *Foolpath* in Bombay many years ago, is now in India to stage his latest play for the Awami Rangmanch, *Shama Har Rang Mein Jalti Hai*. "The IPTA has lost all its roots over the years", said a bitter R. N. Singh to Ashish Rajadhyaksha. "After 30 years of progressive theatre what is the use if you don't call yourselves Marxists, as Hangal refuses to? Do you know what he said to me? 'Don't be so inflexible, we have to accommodate all tastes'."



Smita: for art's sake

A REPUTED astrologer who had seen Nargis' palm years ago when she was number one heroine, had predicted that on account of her fantastic sun-line she would command fame and respect even after she stopped working. Today she has left films far behind her, but fame and good fortune have been following closely behind, as the years of being Mrs Sunil Dutt have proved. She is also the mother of Sunjay Dutt, a rising star. And now, she has been nominated member to the Rajya Sabha. This is surely a great honour for any single individual. Bombay's filmdom rose on its feet to congratulate Nargis. To say the least, Nargis deserved the applause.

SMITA PATIL loves to pick up down-to-earth roles and she prefers art-films to commercial cinema. The only commercial film she has taken up is *Shakti* because she admires Ramesh Sippy the director. Now she has also taken up a small art-film where she will make her seniors and her juniors sit up and gape — at her and her guts too! She plays a middle-aged woman who lives in a densely populated part of Bombay known for its squalor and slums. In this film the slant is anti-

Durgaprasad

heroine; Smita according to the story, nurses an ailing husband and the husband's affliction is V D! The forlorn wife manages a lover and Smita, it is said has put up a superb performance as the wife. Like the slum dwellers, the heroine has bared her body to inject realism into the film.

WHERE is that young and successful director, Chandra Barot, who master-termed that super hit, *Don*? Any other person would have remained in the news on the basis of his first film. But Barot seems to be shy of publicity. Apart from being seen around in the company of his favourite girls, Zeenat and Padmini Kolhapure, Barot hardly makes his presence felt. Either he is the slow-and-

steady type of genius or the type who rests after a great achievement. Wake up Chandra!

DID you know that Rajesh Khanna plans to do only serious work and keep out of politics (one way of saying he is out of the race and has no fight to put up with the reigning superstars)? There is absolutely nothing on his domestic front which can send his name and photograph into film magazines and newspapers. And he is exercising self discipline — no drinking and no food on Tuesdays, except a simple, vegetarian meal after sundown and a tiring day at the studio. This has not only chastened him, but makes him look slimmer and younger. Hope he keeps it up.

Shyam Arunachalakar



Dev Anand: Never say die

DEV ANAND has always been a quiet, fast and furious worker. He had announced his film *Loot* Maar some time ago. Now the film is not only complete, but it is believed to be a masterpiece in photography. And this, in spite of Dev's old, steady camerawizard Fali Mistry's death some time last year. Knowledgeable circles believe that the film will come out a super hit.

AND now look what our favourite li'l gal is up to! Padmini Kolhapure who has been trading in lots of oomph for her fast-shedding baby-fat, is the one to watch for the future and now she has got Amitabh Bachchan for her hero. With Neetu's secret ban on Tina for *Rishi* Padmini is all set to pluck off the best harvest from the field.

MOUSHUMI claims that Vinod was her husband's best friend, but she doesn't know his wife Meena at all. Isn't it strange? How can a person who is supposed to be so close as to be in and out of one's house...and yet his wife remains a total stranger? Don't tell me Moushumi only prefers males for company—come to think of it, which female friends does she have in the industry?



Good fortune and Nargis go together

Leibner

HOW can a wife direct such 'hot' scenes featuring her own husband?" asked my neighbour after seeing some sexy stills of actress-director Sheela's upcoming Tamil film *Kadaal 90 Naal*. These stills showed actress Lavanya, scantily clad and in compromising positions with Ravichandran, hero of yesteryears and Sheela's husband. Ravichandran is apparently trying to find a place for himself with the help of his wife (who's still a popular star in Kerala) and producers who are friendly to her. Sheela herself appears to be in a tight spot. Apart from taking the risk of resurrecting her husband's dormant career, Sheela is directing a Tamil film which means she has to be doubly careful. And Sheela does not look fit enough to play the kind of seductress Lavanya can. In a recent Malayalam hit, *Yetta*, Sheela acted as a nymphomaniac opposite Kamalhasan. The question is whether she can take up such roles frequently.

THE subject of artificial insemination is good enough to weave a mushy story around it and in the recent Tamil release, *Avan Aval Adhu*, Lakshmi portrays a sterile woman who asks her husband to produce a baby with Sripriya's help. In the hands of any Malayalam soft-porno peddler, this theme could have been turned into an exotic, sexy film. But veteran director Mukhta Srinivasan has come out with a sentimental tale of sacrifice and conjugal love. The film cannot be called a super hit but it is certainly doing better business than his previous film *Imayam*, an expensive venture starring Sivaji and Srividya. Incidentally, in *Avan...* Sripriya has stolen a march on Lakshmi in several sequences.

N. T. RAMA RAO, Andhra's all-time superstar who burned his fingers producing a couple of mythological extravaganzas, has switched over to socials once again. And his new film is being directed by Bapiiah, a successful director. Sridevi plays Rama Rao's heart-throb and Kavita the vamp. The initial shooting of the film showed Rama Rao dancing



Rathi Devi puts one pretty foot forward

with semi-nude women. The ageing hero looks out of place in such situations but his fans love to see him surrounded by buxom, younger women. So what's to be done?

WHY is Cho lying low? Last year, he acted in a number of films. But when he began to direct a film with Jal Shankar and Radhika, he was forced to quit outside assignments. The film is yet to be released and we are waiting to see Cho in a good comedy role.

ILLEGAL employees from Kerala who found lucrative jobs in the Gulf countries are returning home. Malayalam producers are worried since the exodus is likely to have a drastic

affect because their films can no longer be exported to countries in the Gulf region. Even struggling actresses who frequently went to the Gulf on cultural visits appear sad and worried.

HOW come politicians are invited to promote films? The makers of *Mangala Nayagi* got Karunanidhi to see the film hoping that he would like it. The ex-CM who is also a popular script writer was moved by the film and gave it a befitting testimonial. Now, this testimonial is being cleverly used to advertise the film. Distributors believe that Karunanidhi's 'certificate' would improve the film's chances but they ought to know that a couple of recent films scripted by Karunanidhi and produced by his close relatives haven't exactly set the box office on fire.

PIOUSJI

Lavanya is Ravichandran's shapely seductress



Beginning May 11

This week the Sun and Mercury are in Aries, Venus alone is in Gemini and Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Rahu are conjoined in Leo. Neptune and Uranus are in Scorpio. Ketu alone is in Aquarius. The Moon will be moving through Aries, Taurus and Gemini from Pisces.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) You will gain through the occult. Astrologers will tell you where your fortunes lie. Check all extravagant tendencies. You will benefit through a member of the fair sex. A happy romance is predicted for some people. Friends and relatives will praise you. On the business front things will move smoothly. Push your affairs to the utmost. **Good dates:** 11, 13, 15 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 2 and 4. **Favourable directions:** North and West.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) A mixed grill is your portion. This week will be moderately fortunate. You are advised to keep on good terms with your employer and those in authority. Exercise tact and patience while dealing with elders. After a minor setback you will gain in business and financial affairs. The domestic front will remain a source of great joy and happiness. **Good dates:** 13, 14 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) This is the time to begin a new venture. Proceed to make any kind of change. You will however experience minor obstacles in your business dealings. Once again your own intuition will prove an excellent guide to success. From middle of the week onwards, a happy romance or "event" is predicted. But it may be followed by separation. **Good dates:** 12, 14 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 2 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Be careful not to displease your employer or chief. Pay attention to business details and take the advice of elders. Apart from some minor domestic problems, this week is quite favourable. A sudden end to a secret affair or association is predicted. Be enterprising and success will be yours. You are advised to keep on good terms with your employer and "authority". **Good dates:** 13, 14, 16 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 9. **Favourable directions:** West and South.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) Treachery may befall you in the near future. A happy romance is predicted. Your health will not pose any problems. New friendships are envisaged. You are likely to face competition in business and in your private life. You will overcome this by consulting elders and relatives. Let your intuition be your guide. Letters will bring good news. Keep your temper under control. **Good dates:** 11, 13 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) A secret friend—perhaps anonymous or unknown to you—will prove helpful. Your business affairs will make good progress provided you exercise tact with employers and elders. A beneficial change of job or residence is likely for professionals. Check extravagant tendencies. Pay attention to business details. **Good dates:** 12, 13 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 5. **Favourable directions:** East and North-west.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) This week begins with a sudden stroke of good fortune. However, you are advised to guard against over-optimism and deception. Take every possible advantage of the favourable influences by hard work and by following your own intuition. Make no important changes in either your private or your public life. You will be successful on many fronts. **Good dates:** 11, 12 and 13. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



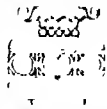
SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) This week begins with the promise of a promotion. Business will progress well but be on your guard against deception. If you are careful, misfortune may be averted. In some cases you will gain substantially. Love and marriage are predicted for both the sexes. Litigation and debts will not worry you. Be content with slow progress. Face delays and obstacles with tact and patience. **Good dates:** 11, 12, 14 and 16. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 3. **Favourable direction:** South.



SAGITTARIUS (November — 22 December 22) Let your intuition be your guide. A promotion will crown a successful week. A happy romance is foreseen. An unexpected development or change will ultimately produce good fortune. You will be benefitted by an elderly person. Letters will bring good news. Your home front will pose no problems. This is an excellent week for love affairs. **Good dates:** 12, 13, 16 and 18. **Lucky numbers:** 8, 7 and 11. **Favourable direction:** North-east.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) Your business affairs will make slow progress. You will face a couple of problems in your domestic life. With industry and initiative you will make further headway this week. Think twice before taking the advice of a friend of the opposite sex regarding financial matters. You will undertake an unexpected journey. **Good dates:** 11, 14, 16 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 5 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Tackle professional problems very carefully. Consult your friends and relatives. You are advised to take a little extra care over routine business affairs. Check all extravagant tendencies. Thanks to your tremendous energy and enterprise your outlook is excellent. A splendid opportunity comes your way. An unexpected expenditure is foreseen in the family. **Good dates:** 12, 13 and 15. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 2 and 4. **Favourable direction:** North.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) A happy week is foreseen although it may not be quite as good as the last week. You will benefit greatly in business and financial affairs. Do not get carried away by your current prosperity. You will gain through secret sources or through elders and insurance policies. **Good dates:** 12, 13 and 15. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 11 and 12. **Favourable direction:** South-west.

M. B. RAMAN

this india

prizes 30 for the entry given first

without comment



JAIPUR : With the approach of the Assembly poll, there is a sudden spurt in the sale of Khadi in Jaipur. Though there is no seasonal rebate in sale, most of the Khadi shops in the city are crowded with young men. They come dressed in mill-made garments and purchase khadi kurta and pyjama. A source said some of them are Congress(I) aspirants for to the Assembly poll. — *The Hindu* (G. V. Mahesh, Bangalore)

SHAHJAHANPUR : A man here been threatening his wife that if she did not persuade her sister to marry his nephew he would render her unfit to show her face to society. He cut her nose on April 17. According to an FIR lodged with the police, when the family was busy entertaining guests at the victim's sister's wedding, her husband called her aside to make a "paan" for him and then chopped off her nose — *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Virendra Kumar Prasad, Revelganj)

TADEPALLIGUDEM : Deny them water so that soft drinks might sell—seems to be the guiding philosophy of beverage manufacturers who are suspected of tampering with water taps. This is possibly why travellers find it difficult to quench their thirst at railway and bus stations in West Godavari. In sharp contrast soft drinks and liquor are available. Also the number of liquor shops is on the rise in all the towns — *The Hindu* (P. Raghava Reddy, Mahbubnagar)

BHOPAL : Marriage prospects for young men in the drought-hit areas of Madhya Pradesh have been affected by the prolonged drought in the State. Parents are not willing to give their daughters in marriage to young men from these areas fearing that they may be asked to fetch water

from long distances. Villages of Hosangabad and Guna districts complained of such peculiar problems of drought-affected areas. According to villages, the number of marriages in these areas had gone down this year — *The Statesman* (Dadiya Mukherjee, Calcutta)

JAIPUR : The idol of Ganesh at the historic fort of Ranthambhore in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district receives 100 letters a week from its devotees all over the country; each letter an invitation to the Lord to join a marriage ceremony or bless an inaugural event. It is a tradition to invite Lord Ganesh before the start of any new work. The Lord at Ranthambhore is widely acclaimed for His generosity and benign nature. Numerous folksongs praise his name as "Ranat Bhanwar" of Ranthambhore. The idol at the temple is reported to be dating back to Prince Hameer who fought endless battles to save this craggy fort from the onslaughts of the first Mughal invaders in the 13th century. There is a post office to receive a stream of letters addressed to the Lord Ranthambhore — *Indian Express* (Venkatesh, Secunderabad)

AN immediate trunk call booked by the Union Minister for Communications, Mr C. M. Stephen, from Bangalore to Cochin on Saturday (April 19) failed to materialise for hours "due to technical reasons". This was disclosed in Cochin on Sunday (April 20) by Mr Stephen himself while speaking at Kalamassey, near Cochin to show that "there is a technical aspect also in these things, apart from the slackness and inefficiency of the employees." He said if this was the experience of the Communications Minister, who traditionally is on a hot line with the rest of the country, at all times, it spoke for itself — *Times of India* (S. M. Kaisane, Bombay)

RATCHUR : A graduate who streaked in the busy Bazaar Street area here for a paltry stake of Rs five, ended up in police custody. Mr Abdul Rauf challenged four of his friends that he would streak for a furlong in the busy street. A serious discussion on "obscenity and cinema" is said to have led to the streaking — *Deccan Herald* (Raghavendra, Bangalore)

WHEN we are in the ditch, there is no one to help us — Jyoti Basu, West Bengal CM

YOU cannot expect that all the money will be diverted to Calcutta. Why don't you check the population growth? — C. K. Jaffar Sheriff, Union Minister of State for Railways at a meeting organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta

THERE is no question of toppling anyone. We seek your cooperation as we do not want to see the state (West Bengal) in decay — Union Energy and Irrigation Minister, A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury

AS Prime Minister, Madam has her way of tackling the problem. As an individual and one of the leaders of the opposition in this state, I have my own way — Subrata Mukherjee's comment on the anti-Assam agitation launched by the Youth Congress(I) in West Bengal

WE don't give any importance to him (Jyoti Basu). He is the Chief Minister of West Bengal, not Assam. What he says is immaterial to us — Prafulla Mahanta, president of the All Assam Students' Union

TO describe me as a moderate and some of my colleagues as hardliners is an old game to create friction among ourselves — Atal Behari Vajpayee

UNDER the leadership of Mr Deng Xiaoping they (the Chinese) are trying to become realistic. For 30 years, their attitude has been hypocritical. Now it seems they are changing — Dalai Lama quoted in *New York Times*

WE will all have to wonder and fear where we will be after four more years of the Carter Administration — Senator Edward Kennedy

IF we had turned to Moscow after the election, I assure you we would have been drowning in dollars and pounds — A senior Zimbabwe Government spokesman quoted in *Time*

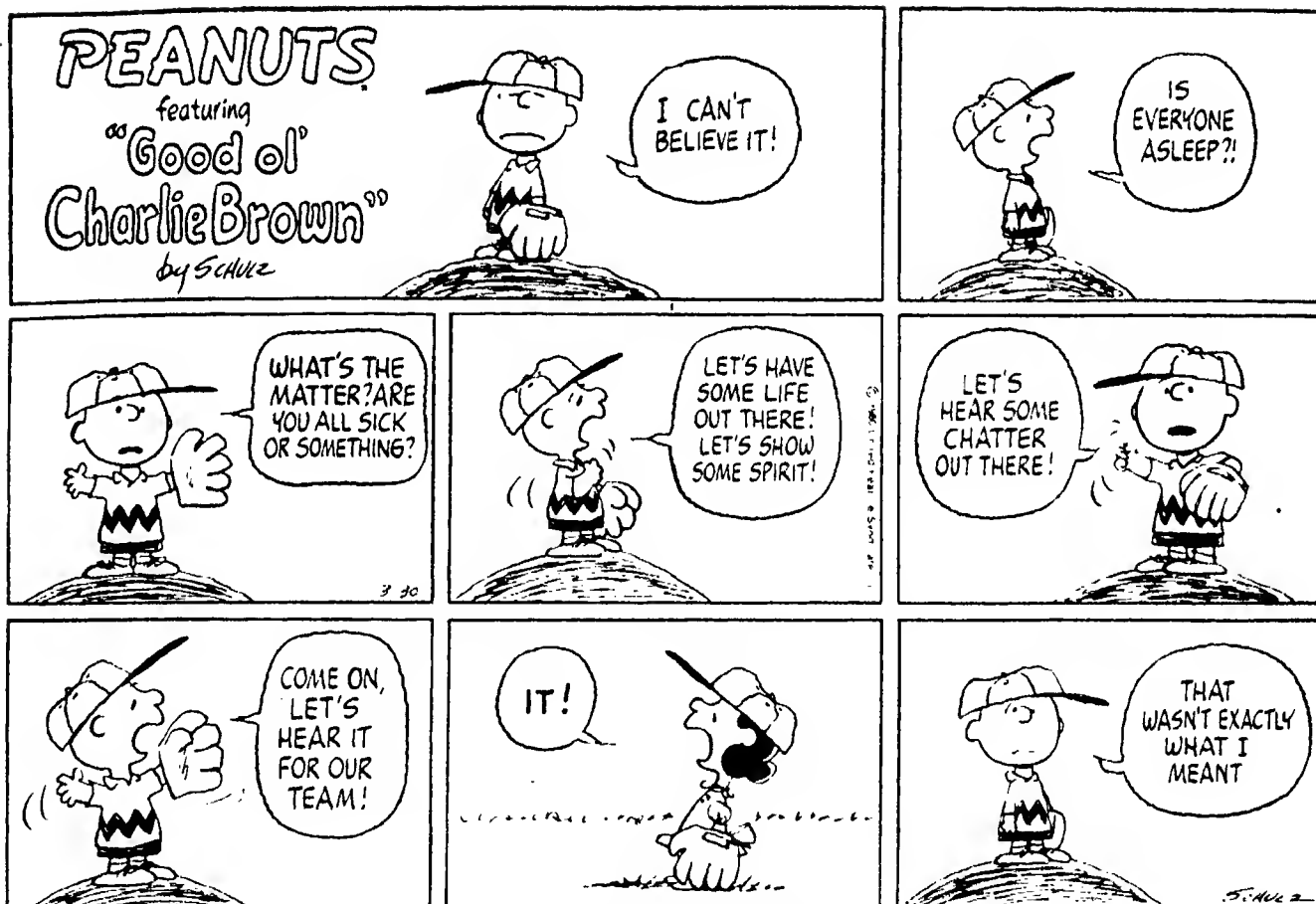
WHEN we reject a film, however commercially successful, year after year, as "non-cinema", we are also ignoring the millions of cinegoers who have not received the grace of aesthetic salvation — Vasant Sathe

THAT Dabboo (Randhir Kapoor) is such a chawltie pie! He is like a Glaxo baby. I want to bite one of his chubby-chubby cheeks off — Rekha, Bombay film actress

india abroad

KUALA LUMPUR : The former director of radiology at Assunta Hospital, Dr A. Dutt, who was sentenced to six months imprisonment for using a forged document, has won his appeal in the High Court against both conviction and sentence. In following

the appeal, the judge said he was satisfied that the document in question was not forged, according to the *New Straits Times*, Malaysia. Dr Dutt, an Indian was employed by the Hospital from 1963 to March 1976 when he was dismissed — *Statesman*



RANBAXY'S GARLIC PEARLS

A few facts you should know.

Garlic has been well-known from earliest times for its medicinal properties. Medical authorities have accepted the value of garlic in correcting various health problems. Garlic can be taken raw or cooked or in capsule form. But to derive the maximum medicinal benefits from garlic, it should be taken in the most effective way.

Why not raw Garlic?



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Why not cooked Garlic?



On cooking, the effective medicinal properties of garlic are lost.

Why RANBAXY'S GARLIC PEARLS ?

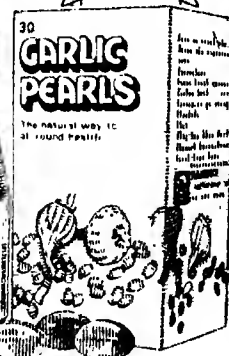
Ranbaxy Laboratories, a trusted name with the medical profession, now gives you all the benefits of raw garlic —without the smell. Ranbaxy's Garlic Pearls contain the pure extract of raw garlic in easy-to-digest, soft gelatin capsules—the most effective way of deriving the medicinal properties of garlic.

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- Help ease disabling joint pains.
- Prevent and control recurring coughs and colds.

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Take two pearls twice daily regularly.



The natural way to all-round health.

QUARRELLING CHILDREN

IF Sanjay Gandhi can have his Youth Congress, then why can't Babuji's son Suresh Kumar have his Yuva Sangharsh Vahini? Suresh Kumar has decided to enter politics in right earnest and a meeting of his own brand of youth was held recently in New Delhi's Vithalbhair Patel House. In fact the phenomenon of sons and daughters interfering in the Party affairs has become so fashionable these days that even the dilapidated Congress(U) has been affected. The fight for supremacy in the Party is not confined to the Party president, Devraj Urs, and the new entrant, Babu Jagjivan Ram. Suresh Kumar and Urs' "adopted daughter", Nirmala Prasad, too have joined the fight. Nirmala Prasad's interference in the affairs of the AICC(U) office at one stage was such that not even a leaf used to flutter in the premises of 3, Raisina Road (AICC-U headquarters) without her prior approval. Even the general secretaries were reportedly overawed by her. Now Suresh Kumar wants to enjoy that position and perhaps rightfully, because there is a strong lobby led by Raj Bahadur and Younus Saleem, two general secretaries, which favours the installation of Babuji as the Party president.

The differences in the AICC(U) came to surface when Urs issued a notification stating that he had appointed Babuji as the chairman of the Party's Central Campaign Committee. It may be recalled that Mrs Gandhi too had appointed Babuji to the same post in the pre-1977 Congress (Yashpal Kapoor was the real head of that committee, which was entrusted with the task of organising the 'Dynamic Decade' celebrations when Mrs Gandhi completed ten years of uninterrupted rule in 1976). Babuji did not want that post all over again and he told Urs that. But Urs was not prepared to cancel the appointment and he insisted that if Babuji did not want the post, then he should publicly refuse it. But Babuji's ego was hurt and he prevailed upon the lobby of general secretaries favourable to him to issue a statement saying that the AICC(U) office was not 'aware' of any such appointment made by the president. A series of meetings was held between the Babuji lobby and Urs' representative, Nirmala Prasad, at the latter's official residence at Vinay Marg, but as Urs was adamant, the pro-

Babuji lobby issued the statement as desired by its mentor.

Nirmala Prasad, incidentally, is a Government servant, working as a Director in the Ministry of External Affairs. It is strange how a Government servant can take such active interest in Party politics.

PUNJAB CONNECTION

THE Union Minister of State for Finance, Jagannath Pahadia, is a strong contender for the Chief Ministership of Rajasthan. Mohanlal Sukhadia and the former Youth Congress general secretary, Janardan Singh Gehlot, are his main opponents in the state, but the man who is intriguing Pahadia most is 'strangely not a politician



Balram Jakhar

from his own state but the Lok Sabha Speaker, Balram Jakhar, who belongs to Punjab. It may be recalled that Chaudhury Balram had served as a Deputy Minister in the Giani Zail Singh Ministry in Punjab during the Emergency and later was the leader of the Congress(I) in the state Assembly after the June 1977 poll. His elevation to the coveted post of Lok Sabha Speaker was reportedly prompted by the consideration that being a Jat, his appointment would help to consolidate the position of the Congress(I) among the community which has earned the reputation of being blindly behind Chaudhury Charan Singh. It is reliably learnt that many aspirants for Congress(I) tickets in Rajasthan have the blessings of Chaudhury Balram Jakhar.

CHICKENING OUT

THE recent meeting of the leaders of three opposition Parties — Janata, Lok Dal and Congress(U) — at Bombay not only served to bring together some like-minded leaders who are keen to join hands to face the Congress(I) challenge, but also exposed some of the chicken-hearted leaders in the

ranks of the opposition. Sharad Pawar's initial enthusiasm was missing when the organisers of the meeting assembled at Bombay on April 20 on the eve of the meeting. Sharad Pawar had offered to be one of the coordinators at the Bombay end for the meeting, but at the eleventh hour he wavered and did not want to attend the meeting. But a frank talk by Devaraj Urs and some other opposition leaders made him change his mind and he eventually attended it. Similar was the case with Nandini Satpathy, who, despite agreeing to attend, did not turn up. Sharad Pawar and Nandini Satpathy apparently want to keep a low profile in the coming elections in Maharashtra and Orissa, to avoid destroying all chances of making up with the Congress(I) in the future.

THE OTHER SANJAY

WHO could be the next president of the Youth Congress(I)? Among those in the fray at present are two general secretaries of the organisation, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Vasudeva Panicker and some State unit presidents. At one stage it was thought that the Delhi unit president, Jagdish Tytler, would get the coveted post. But now the strongest contender is none other than Rajkumar Sanjay Singh of Amethi, who at present is the head of the UP unit. Sanjay Singh has become the symbol of the "Thakur" lobby in the Congress(I). The power of this lobby is such that its members have been proudly saying that they can get as many nominations in the forthcoming elections as they want. After all, as many as 108 MPs owe their loyalties to this lobby, it is pointed out.

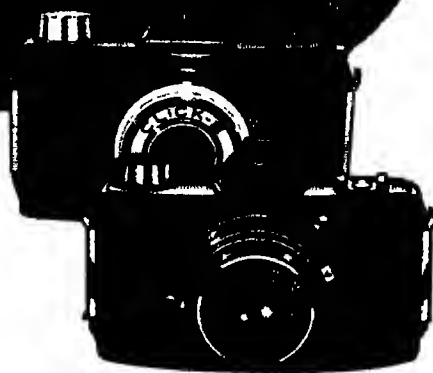
FIRST STEP DOWN

AMONG the Union Ministers, Finance Minister R. Venkataraman has earned the reputation of being a no-nonsense, strict man in the bureaucratic circles of the capital. But his days in the Cabinet are rumoured to be numbered because of his reluctance to take orders from the right quarters. His removal from the Industry portfolio, which he held in addition to Finance, is reported to be the first step in the action contemplated by Congress(I) 'higher-ups'. The second step may well see him out of the Cabinet.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN



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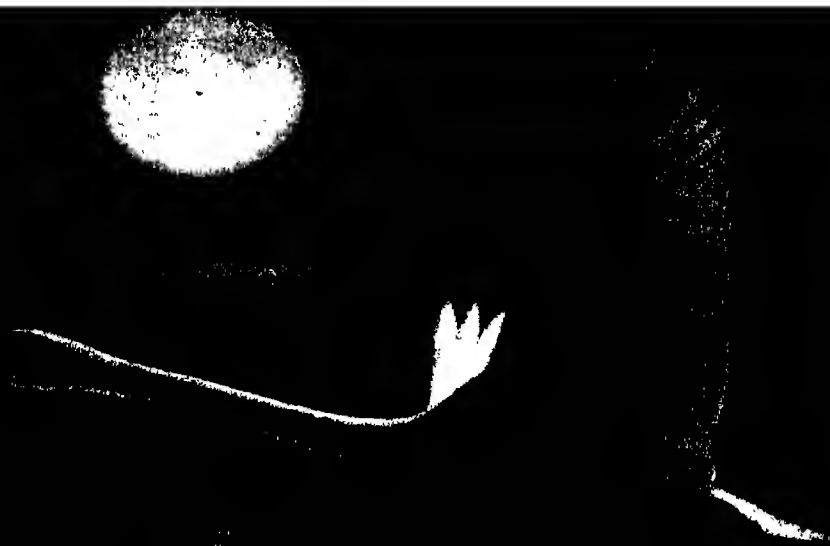


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SUNDAY

**Exclusive!
Uncle
Balu's
love story
in his own
words**

**Why Shoba
Committed
Suicide**

**The Saga of
Kamdeo Singh**

**What did Sheikh Mustafa of Dubai
say when he finished a Limca?**

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to Thums Up?



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Shri M. Hidayatullah
confers an Award
for Excellence
in Export
on the makers
of Thums Up.**



On April 24 President Reddy presented the best actress (Urvashi) award to the 19-year-old south Indian actress Shoba. One week later she lay dead in her bedroom in Madras. Who drove Shoba to suicide? Was it her parents who virtually lived off her? Or was it her director-husband Balu Mahendra who had been a veritable "Professor Higgins" to her? Or was it our society with its lopsided values that finally drove her to the edge of despair?

After Assam it is now Manipur which is hellbent on driving out foreigners. Violence gripped the state capital, Imphal, between April 19 and 23 during which more than 7,000 people deserted their homes in fear. This, coupled with the extremist violence plaguing the state for over two years, brought the Congress(I) administration to the brink of collapse. An on-the-spot report.



Kamdeo Singh, the most powerful dacoit-smuggler in the country, died in a police encounter on April 18. Starting as an impoverished bullock cart driver, he went on to become a multi-millionaire with a Robin Hood image. What is more, he played a vital role in Bihar politics and without his help no one could win elections in his native Begusarai district. SUNDAY correspondents recount the saga of his life.

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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra
David McMahon, Saumitra Hanjra, Tathankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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"How I overcame my shyness and learnt to Tingle"



There was a time when even if my neighbour's pet dog Sheila looked at me, I'd blush.

I used to get pink all over even at the thought of being watched.

But, fortunately, all that lies in the past now. I overcame my shyness when I learnt the joys of Tinging.

"My pre-Tingle days"

Before I learnt to Tingle, the only person I could look straight in the eye was my mother. My mother, an avid fan of Sigmund Freud, was fully qualified in giving me the psychiatric help I needed.

"Son," she used to say, "only you can help yourself. Concentrate on one part of your body which gives you pleasure. Only then can you get your self-confidence."

So one night I tried.

I explored my body. And discovered my tongue.

"I learn to Tingle"

After having discovered my tongue, I didn't know what to do. That is, until I was invited to a party by my neighbour.

As usual I didn't want to go. But mother insisted I go.

So, there I stood, not knowing what to do with myself, as I blushed in the corner.

Suddenly, a pretty young thing walked up to me and said, "Hey, let me teach you how to

Tingle". I spluttered and stammered, "Wh... what, here?" She laughed and told me.

"You can Tingle anywhere"

That's what she said. I could Tingle anywhere. All I needed was a lovely chilled, frosted bottle of Double Seven Lime-Lemon.

Take a big gulp, and don't swallow it. Then move your tongue around. You will feel thousands of bubbles explode against your palate. Concentrate on your tongue. Let it taste the crisp, clean flavour of Double Seven Lime-Lemon. Mmmmm!

"Try to Tingle, you'll love it."

Go out now and have a Double Seven Lime-Lemon, and discover the joys of Tinging.

It really works wonders.

And ever since I learnt to Tingle, there was no looking back.

And even if I do so today, all I will see is Sheila, that crazy dog, looking at me.

She doesn't bother me anymore.

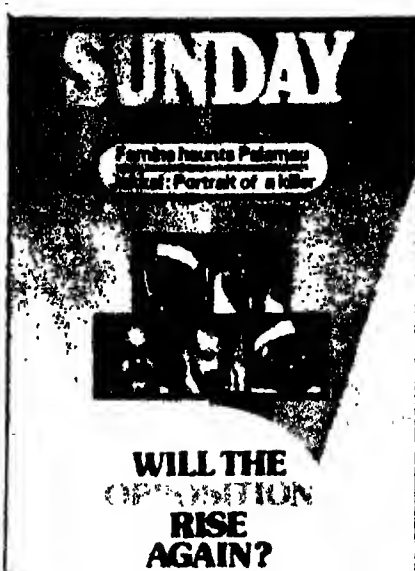


Double Seven

LIME-LEMON*

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Opposition position

KEWAL VARMA in the cover story "Will the Opposition rise again", (April 13) rightly points out that there is a crying need for a broad-based left-of-centre Party. The people of India are already on the verge of being disillusioned with the Party at the Centre. Leaders like Chandrashekhar, Chandrajit Yadav and George Fernandes should try to unite the youth, kisans and the women and form a left-oriented Party.

Hero or villain?

C. Y. GOPINATH elevates Jakkal ("Jakkal", April 13) almost to the level of a hero. He would have done better if he had concentrated more on criminology, of course with reference to Jakkal. Such write-ups should not be published often for they create undesirable impressions on the subconscious mind, which, in turn, influence man's actions. *Violet Mac Gibbon, Calcutta.*

Help the helpless

THIS refers to the special report "Famine haunts Palamau" (April 13) by Tirthankar Ghosh and Sajal Chakravarty. It should act as an eye-opener to government officials. A good amount of rainfall may help but the monsoon is far away. The state and the Central government officials are totally careless about the famine-stricken people of Bihar. The lower middle class people are the worst sufferers. They are the ones who will neither work as labourers nor like to beg. The government should come forward immediately and offer the necessary help. *Arun Sankar, Jorhat*

THE WRITE-UP is quite impressive with its supporting statistical data.

Only then can an alternative to Congress (I) be offered. *Bhaskar, Hajipur*

THERE is a question which still remains unanswered. Perhaps, the only Parties wedded to a definite ideology are the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Communist Parties. But unfortunately they cannot offer a forceful alternative. And the new variations of Congress and Janata are yet to impress the electorate.

The Congress (I) government is working under great pressure, both internal and external. But the electorate is getting increasingly restless. It Mrs Gandhi fails to deliver the goods she had promised the people will positively look for other alternatives. It is high time that the opposition tried to forget the petty squabbles

H. Krishna Murthy, Pune.

I FULLY disagree with Kewal Varma that the opposition will rise again in the near future. He appears to have based his analysis on faulty premises. The conclusion he has drawn is dependent on a number of 'ifs'. It is mere wishful thinking to say leaders like Bahuguna, Vajpayee, Chandrashekhar and Madhu Limaye would ever come together and form a powerful front against Mrs Gandhi. These are the very persons who were responsible for the breaking up of Janata and paved the way for Mrs Gandhi's comeback.

B. Samanta, Midnapur

It makes an honest attempt to make an in-depth study of this grave situation. But one of the authors' statements is certainly misleading. In the last but one paragraph they state: "After the elections the Assam agitation started." The Assam agitation started way back in October 1979, long before the general elections. Even the stoppage of the flow of crude oil from the state started in December 27, 1979, which also was before the general elections. *Manotosh Sharma, Gauhati*

Alliance, a-gain

ARTHUR PAIS in his "Congress (I) an equal partner" (April 13) clearly brought out the political climate in Tamil Nadu. He has rightly pointed out that the younger and the militant section of the DMK wanted to go it alone in the coming Assembly election and form a government on their own. But this could not be done because Karunanidhi is keen on gaining out of the alliance with Mrs Gandhi. Perhaps Karunanidhi is waiting for the right moment when he will be in a position to impose terms on Mrs Gandhi.

V. A. Poonkodi Selvan, Thiruvaiyaru.

Only force left

THIS refers to Barun Sengupta's "Left Mrs Gandhi's main target" (April 13). Will Mrs Gandhi be successful in tackling the communists to her benefit or will the two Communist Parties be able to play an important role as an anti-Congress (I) force in the years to come? That is a million dollar question. But the people of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura should be congratulated for their brave fight against communal and authoritarian forces. The people of India will soon realise that the left is the only potential force which can successfully combat the communal RSS, the despotic Congress (I) and the fake Socialists. *M. Atiyab Siddiqi, Delhi.*

I FULLY agree with Mr Sengupta that "Mrs Gandhi's reemergence will hit the leftists more than the rightists in the country." The Soviet suggestion to build a bridge of cooperation between the Congress (I) and the left forces calls for a serious consideration. Even if it is translated into practice it would be nothing but a bridge of convenience. Sooner or later Mrs Gandhi will strike a severe blow at the leftists and as a consequence the bridge will crumble to pieces. So the country's left forces should concentrate on forming a united front so that they can return the blow with equal force. *G. Sarma, New Delhi.*

BARUN SENGUPTA's statements appear to be full of contradictions. First he says if Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi decide to topple the leftist governments the left forces cannot save them. According to Mr Sengupta "it can best create some difficulties in the states and Parliament for some time." He also claims that "it will be a shortlived resistance" and tries to justify his view by drawing attention to the dormant role played by the CPI(M) during the Emergency. At the same time he predicts that "once Mrs Gandhi pulls down any of the three left governments no amount of persuasion will stop a head-on collision between a majority of the left forces of the country and Mrs Gandhi". He also visualises that "the majority of the left forces" will join hands with all other anti-Mrs Gandhi forces" and it will then be the pre-1977 situation. The reference to the dormant role of the CPI(M) during Emergency shows his lack of understanding. During the Emergency the CPI(M) had no other option but to lie low since they were the main target of both the Naxalites and the Congress (I). But the scene is different now. The CPI(M) and other left forces have emerged as a powerful force to be reckoned with. *A. K. Sengupta, Madhyamgram,*

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TEXTILES

Getting sentimental

Mollie M. Kays of The Far Pavilions fame read British Nandy's article "Jane kahan gaye woh din..." (March 30) Here is her reply to what Mr Nandy wrote about her:

DEAR Nowhere Man

Thank you for your bewitching inaccuracies. I am not as nice as all that.

I shall also preserve very happy memories — of a charming morning spent with the author of some of the most haunting poems I have come across for many a year. Yet I am curious to know one thing. Why you of all people, are so afraid of anything sentimental? What do you find so alarming about it — or off-putting? You who have written lines like "let your hands create the new language of our love, so that fireflies may weave the manuscripts of our dreams"? And such poems as *The Wait, Winter, Till You Come*

and a dozen others in the same vein? If those are not 'sentimental' then I don't know what is, and I suspect that underneath that flip, satirical and fashionably disillusioned shell you are really an old softie at heart! A pushover for love ("You are the wind, I love you") for nostalgia and time gone by and lost ("an old-fashioned song echoes in the dark and returns to me") for sunsets, night winds and falling rain, and that good old 'loneliness of the human spirit' that we all hear so much about these days. Well, I can only be grateful for it, since if you were not, you wouldn't write such moving poetry, but be going in for 'stark' verse and 'brittle, bitter wit', and all that jazz, instead.

If I may misquote Woolcott, to judge from your published work 'the toiling students' of the year 2080 will be able to gather that you were, for instance, 'one who thought often and enthusiastically of death, and whose most frequent and most in-

tensely felt emotion was the pang of love'. From your very moving poems, they might even construct, as the paleontologist constructs a dinosaur, a picture of our Mr "Nandy" wringing his hands at sundown beside an open grave and looking pensively into the middle-distance at the receding figure of some personable lass disappearing over the hill with another fellow on her arm. Our twenty-first century students may possibly be moved to say of him that, like Patience, our Mr Nandy yearned his living, and they may even be astute enough to guess that the moment the aforesaid personable lady wrecked the pose by showing some sign of interest, it would be the turn of the sorrowing poet himself to disappear in the other direction, as fast as he could travel.

May you go on from strength to strength and write another hundred books at least! — (150 for preference!)

Mollie M. K. Hamilton, Sussex, UK

Disputed facts

KEWAL VARMA'S article "Fiddling with national unity" (April 6) was interesting. But was not Mr Varma himself fiddling with national unity when he made such an emotional and rash statement without really probing the Assamese situation? He says: "Over a period of time the Assamese have been reduced to a minority in their own home state ... the genuine fear of the dominant ethnic community seeing themselves getting obliterated." Even a casual glance at the statistical handbook of Assam, 1978 published by the Government of Assam would reveal the fact that during the period between 1931 and 1971 the number of Assamese-speaking population increased four and a half times whereas the number of Bengali-speaking population and other linguistic groups have not even doubled. Among the 13 major language-speaking people of India the increase of the Assamese-speaking population during the two decades from 1951 to 1971 was the highest. It would be better for Mr Varma to come up with the precise facts and figures on which he based his statement.

Sunil Bhattacharjee, Tinsukia, Assam

THE year in which the East India Company made Assam part of India is 1824 and not 1892 as stated by Mr Varma. Assam was made a part of India as a result of the 1824-26 British-Burmese war during the tenure of Lord Amherst.

D. L. Banik, Darrang, Assam

Mark, it's BARC

THOUGH the title "BARC is worse than its bite" (April 13) was delightful there is no such organisation as Bhabha Atomic Energy Commission, but Atomic Energy Commission and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (popularly known as BARC). M. R. Deokar, Trombay.

Friends in need

I AM preparing a pen friends' directory of the handicapped. Those who are interested may please contact me directly at: 57C, Ballygunge Circular Rd, Calcutta-700 019 (Phone No. 48 1177/47 8445). Age, sex and hobbies should be mentioned, and all those who respond will receive a free copy of the directory. Please note, there are no obligations. Mrigank Kocher, Calcutta

Lethal waste

IN "Accident at Tarapur" (April 6), it is strange that no mention was made of the awesome problem of nuclear waste. The large-scale production of nuclear energy also means production of radioactive poison in terrifying quantities. Most of the nuclear waste is stored in underground tanks but a leaking tank can contaminate the water under the ground, which can cause cancer and play havoc with human genes and chromosomes. Can we enjoy the benefits of nuclear power and yet

avoid pollution?

Rajesh Verma, Gangtok, Sikkim

IT IS high time that the performance of the Department of Atomic Energy was subject to surveillance and policing regularly by an independent body and the evaluations of nuclear power plants and heavy water plants were made, available to the public. The veil of secrecy around our nuclear projects is unnecessary as the technology used is common in all nuclear energy-producing countries. Protection from the public eye has only helped to produce a lethargic and inefficient management who know they are safe from censure. U. Bose, Talcher

ONE is shocked to note the delay in plugging the "pin-hole leaks" at the Tarapur plant, which are costing the nation around Rs five lakhs per day. The never-ending controversy, as narrated by Olga Tellis, over the handling of the "pin-hole leaks" only reveals how organisational constraints and careerism interfere in the progress of nuclear technology. V. A. Elavazhagan, Thiruvaharur

Training traffickers

THIS refers to the report "Sold and married" (April 13) by Gopal Sachar. Has Mr Sachar ever been to eastern UP, Bihar and Orissa? Probably not. A journey by either A. T. Mail or Vaishali Express between Gorakhpur and Lucknow would reveal the root cause of this and many other social evils which have become customary in these parts. The trains of the north-eastern railway ply on perhaps the longest rakes in India. They carry more passengers, including children and women with sucklings in arms, on the roof of the coaches than within them. The armed police guards and TTEs are mostly busy extorting bribes from girl traffickers, vendors and hawkers, who infest these trains. Countless commuters have been kill-

ed after being hit by bridges and signalling equipment. The social status of a man in this region depends on the number of children his wife is credited with. It is not surprising to find even mothers-in-law competing with their daughters-in-law and daughters in producing babies. And yet, it is scandalous for these women to come out of their houses even to take their children to hospital. The idea perhaps is to leave women absolutely free from all other social responsibilities except that of bringing forth as many girls as possible in a lifetime for the industrious population of Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra. For local consumption, a girl must carry a huge dowry with her. Is there any surprise that "Babu Shadiwalas" thrive in these parts?

P. S. Rathaur, Basti

COVER STORY

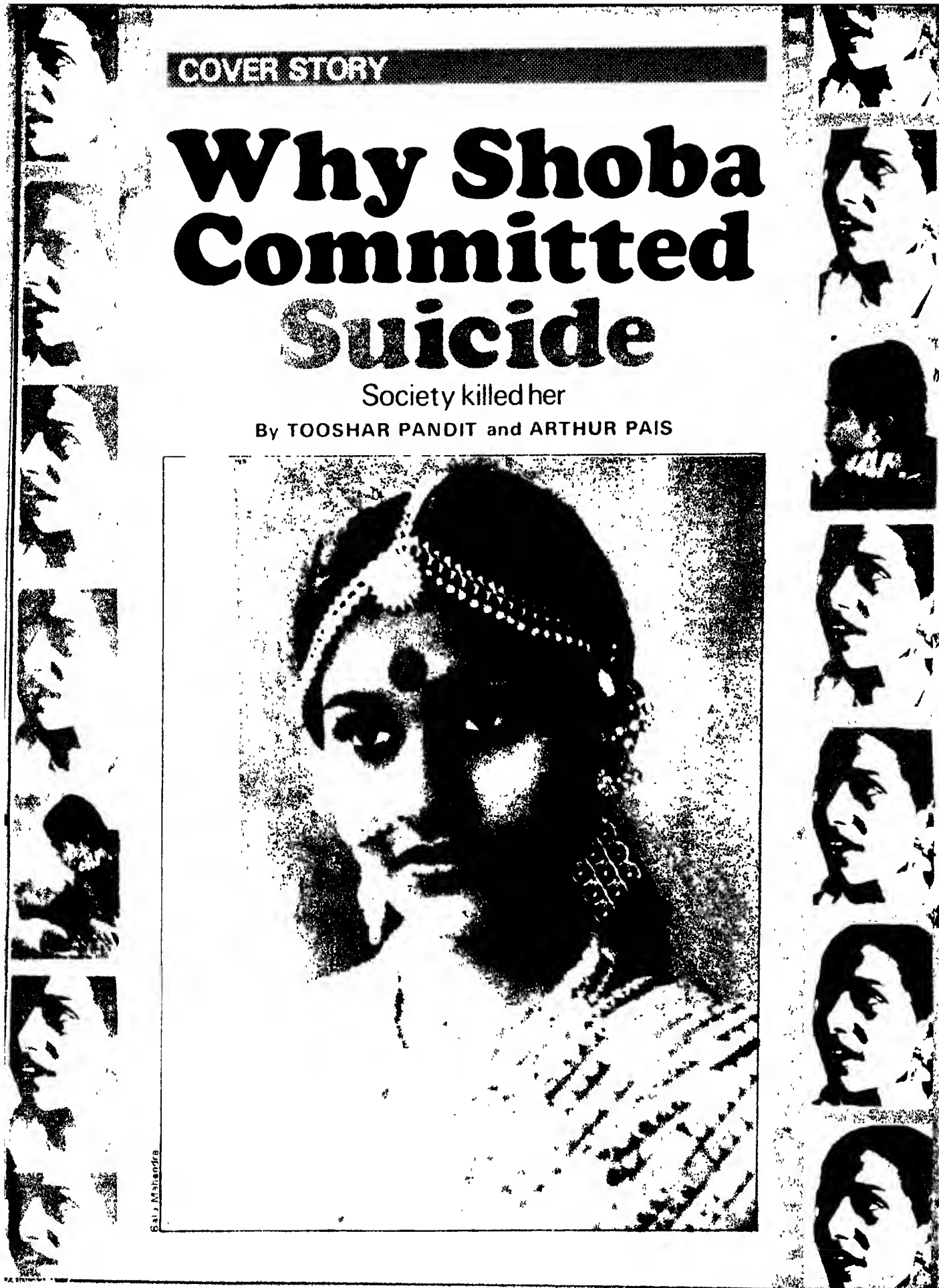
Why Shoba Committed Suicide

Society killed her

By TOOSHAR PANDIT and ARTHUR PAIS



Salil Mahendra





TWO years ago an astrologer predicted that Shoba would be very independent in her actions. She would resist anyone who tried to impose on her in any way. She would choose her husband without caring about what society said. On a piece of paper, now crumpled and soiled (see photocopy), the astrologer wrote: "In your life you always crave for affection and love and you get terribly upset when people ignore or insult you even slightly." He also predicted a very successful career after the age of 20.

The character analysis was accurate. And all the predictions came true. Except one. When she was only 18 years and eight months old, Shoba, the most brilliant rising star of the southern screen, was dead. Shoba had committed suicide.

Shoba first faced the cameras at the age of three, in order to support an impoverished family. By the time she was ten, she had bagged her first award: the Kerala state award for a memorable performance in a Malayalam film called *Sandoora Cheppu*. By 1980, the early promise had flowered, and Shoba had the film world at her feet. She had reached the pinnacle of her profession by winning the highest award an actress can get in the country, the national award of Urvashi, for her portrayal of a warm-hearted slum siren who is seduced by a truck driver and pays for this indiscretion with her life. The film was called *Pasi* (The Hunger), and in addition to drawing the praise of critics, it also went on to become a major commercial hit in cinema-crazy Tamil Nadu.

The moneybags, more interested in commercial acceptability than artistic achievement, started speaking enthusiastically about her *rasi*—luck. Only three years ago she was lucky if she could get Rs. 20,000 per film; now she commanded a price of Rs. 75,000 per film. And by this time, she had also fallen in love, and secretly married, Balu Mahendra, a talented filmmaker who also had a national award, in cinematography, to his credit. This was the love which gave Shoba her greatest joy—and finally destroyed her.

The relationship reflected the stormy independence and the courage that were the hallmarks of Shoba's character. Not only was Balu Mahendra, 36, twice her age, he was already married and had a ten-year-old son. The first time Shoba had met Balu she had been a child in pigtails, and he an established filmmaker.

In fact, it was Balu who became a kind of guardian of Shoba's in the filmworld, and she looked upon him as a father. She called him "uncle" and even after their relationship had stopped being platonic, and they had openly told the world that they were man and wife, she never stopped calling him "uncle". The affair created an uproar. Her family objected violently. A *pradish* Press printed snipes about this "incestuous" rela-

tionship. Shoba, who grew up lonely and received from her "uncle" the love and pampering, the involvement, found that the price that society was demanding for her happiness was too much. As if to mock both the horoscope and the world, long before her twentieth birthday, on May 1, Shoba killed herself in the house rented by Balu just about a month ago for the two of them. The initial evidence clearly points to a suicide. She was discovered with a pink noose made from a sari around her neck; a shred of the same cloth was stuck to the fan hook, and an upturned stool was lying beside her dead body.

Shoba committed suicide on the very day that her fans and the industry had kept for felicitations for her Urvashi award. Her suicide note was in English, a language which Balu taught the unschooled (her family decided that she must work rather than go to school) Shoba. The note said: "Uncle, sorry for everything. I am responsible for my death." And it was signed Shoba Mahendra—a title which she never used since she could not, as she was not legally married to Balu Mahendra yet.



ON May 1, K. P. Menon had dropped in to see Shoba in her new home. In fact, he was waiting outside her bedroom, thinking she was still asleep and not wanting to wake her up, while inside she was ending her life. "I could hear music filtering through the closed door and I thought how careless it was of her to go to sleep with the tape running," remembers Menon. When the door still remained closed after an hour's waiting, Menon asked the maid Vasanthi why Shoba was sleeping so late that day. The maid replied that perhaps Shoba did not get much sleep the previous night as she was crying and weeping till three in the morning. Had there been any tiff with Balu? Menon asked. The maid only said that they had "some discussions" before Balu left to spend the night with Akila, his first wife.

Menon decided to wake his daughter up. He banged at the door and called out, "Shoba, wake up. Today is the first day of the month. Your father is here, as usual." The only response was silence. Menon was worried now. Thinking that his daughter was upset because Balu had spent the night with Akila, he decided to look for Balu and bring him along to pacify his daughter. He went out to the studios, but after a futile two-hour search, he came back. The bedroom door was still shut. He began banging the door repeatedly in an effort to wake up Shoba. Balu eventually arrived around one thirty in the afternoon. Menon told him that Shoba was not opening her door. Balu went swiftly towards the bedroom and called out, "Ammu (that was what he called her), this is me, your Raja. Open up. I'm starving."

Once again, silence. By this time, both Menon and Balu had become jittery. Even the bedroom windows

had been securely bolted from inside. Balu fished out a screwdriver from somewhere, and driving it through one of the windows managed to open it. Shoba was lying prostrate on the floor, in a yellow choli and matching ghagra, "Menon! Menon!" Balu screamed, "she is lying on the floor!" But neither of them really thought she was dead; their first reaction was that she had fainted.

The only bettering ram that Balu could find was a huge grindstone, and he picked it up and began hitting the door with it till it gave way. As soon as Balu shook the body, he knew it was all over. "Still," he told us, "I was hoping against hope. Surely, somehow Ammu could be brought back to life. She had always been so full of life." It was an impossible hope.

Balu went to the biggest police station in the area, on Mount Road to report what had happened. While he was enmeshed in the procedural wrangles there, Menon sat beside the body of his daughter like a drugged man, holding Shoba's feet. "I just didn't know what to do. Somehow I did manage to call my wife. My voice sounded so distorted to her that she could not recognise it till I told her I was her husband, her daughter's father," says Menon. Shoba's mother Prema came immediately with her friends and relatives. Jyothi, Shoba's younger brother, went to Akila's house. "I went there to look for



Balu," Jyothi explains. But Balu says that Jyothi threatened Akila with revenge.

Balu Mahendra returned to Shoba's house at about three in the afternoon, in a police van. The street was brimming with people, and if he was apprehensive about his personal safety, then his apprehensions were justified. Thanks to the abuse that Shoba's family, particularly her mother, had heaped on him, and the Press stories which painted him as a gory cradle snatcher, the people immediately began to suspect him of murder and refused to accept the suicide theory. (When the post mortem takes place the time of Shoba's death it can easily be verified whether Balu was with her or not during that period, and this was one night which Balu had not spent with Shoba.) But some among the crowd shouted "killer" when they saw Balu. And Prema Shoba's mother, who was always bitter about the man who stole her money earning his way from her, is equally convinced that this was no suicide. My daughter, Prema says, "was not a coward and only cowards commit suicide."

Prema's version purports to have the evidence for this serious charge against Balu. She thinks that the reason for the murder was that she could not meet the financial demands being made on her by Balu. The suicide note she feels is a fake, as it is signed Shoba Mahendra, a name which Shoba did not use normally. And she thinks that even by standing on the stool, Shoba could not have reached the fan hook from which she allegedly hanged herself, and neither her eyeballs nor her tongue were protruding. Her charge against the police was, why was the postmortem conducted in such haste? Secondly, although Shoba was a Christian, why was she cremated instead of being buried? Prema also accused Balu of keeping Shoba away from her relatives. (Balu's version is different, see following story) and she claimed that she had a letter from Shoba shortly before her death in which Shoba had allegedly said that she was not happy with Balu.

The family physician of the Menons D. (Mrs) Kannamma Roosevelt who along with Dr. Rita Vijayam accompanied Prema to Shoba's house after the news of the death, has some doubts about the suicide theory too. She told us, Shoba's body was certainly lying on the floor, but quite a distance from the hook. My impression is that it could also have been a simulation. Shoba's father, the frail soft spoken K. P. Menon did not get into these controversies, in deed, he gave us the impression that he tended to concur with the police theory of a suicide.

AS IN life so in death Shoba had to be in the eye of the storm. She was born in an inconspicuous nursing home in Madras on September 23, 1961 to K. P. Menon whose pretensions did not quite mix up to his impoverished status and Prema, a small time

actress. Menon's claims were regal: "Look, my father's brother-in-law is a direct descendant of the Maharajas of Calicut". But he was a drifter who eloped with Prema after a nine-month courtship, abandoning his legal wife, his four children, and his automobile spare parts shop in Coimbatore to settle down in Madras in 1959. Shoba grew up in an environment where she constantly felt vulnerable and insecure.

She was first sent to the classy Church Park Convent, but before she had reached the fifth standard she was withdrawn from school to earn the bread for the family with her talents in front of the camera—and she had a host of relatives and hangers-on to feed. At a time when children are supposed to be busy with their arithmetic, Shoba was shuttling from one studio to another chaperoned by her mother, looking for work. And for a very interesting reason, her father would not allow her mother to work in films any longer. From the age of three Shoba has been the goose which laid the golden eggs for the Menons.

Perhaps out of a sense of guilt, her father occasionally tried to send her back to school, although the mother always wanted her to continue working. Once he put his foot down and made Shoba refuse an offer to act in a film called *Poom Pata*. Shoba's replacement walked off with an award and Shoba's mother never forgave the father for this. "Prema would always say that I had deprived my daughter of the prize," Menon recalls. The very next year, however, Shoba won that state award for another film "Thank God she did so," recalls Menon. "After that I just withdrew letting Prema have her way." Having tried and failed in successive businesses, Menon gradually faded into the background and Prema zealously pursued her ambition of making her daughter a money spinner.

When Balu Mahendra, already a celebrity, came into the life of this lonely, fantasy-struck child, he instantly won her affection and trust. He was the kind of father that Shoba was looking for: brilliant, tender, affectionate. And as she grew up and felt the need to confide in someone, it was Balu she turned to. Her own father had left for a small job in Dubai in 1976. Eventually, Balu, the friend, philosopher and guide, also became a lover. They fell desperately in love with each other.

For a while Balu was a Santa Claus for the Menons. "When he came to our house one day with an advance of Rs 1000 to sign Shoba for his maiden directorial venture *Kokila*, we were so thrilled," recalls Shoba's uncle Jyothi. "We were really in a bad shape and we were glad to be associated with a celebrity who sought to father Shoba. That day we made Shoba touch his feet in gratitude. The father, Menon, remembers that after the launching of *Kokila*, Balu had written to him in Dubai saying that



Pictures of Shoba as a child star



he should not worry about Shoba, and she was as much a daughter to Balu as she was to Menon.

"Balu pampered her beyond limits, buying dolls, chocolates and books, feeding her, amusing her all the time. Then they started going to late shows, although Shoba was always accompanied by at least one member of the family," Syothi recalled. But by the time the Tamil hit *Mul'um Malarum* was released in 1979, one could begin to hear the wisecracks in the studios: Give Balu a picture and he will cast Shoba in it. Newspapers started dropping salacious hints. Shoba's mother Prema claims that the first time they began to suspect a relationship other than platonic between Shoba and Balu was when she returned from a shooting stint for *Azhimukha Kolangal*. And one day Prema's sister accidentally saw Balu putting vermillion on Shoba's head.

One day Shoba was summoned from the studios under the pretext that her mother Prema was seriously ill. Prema was perfectly healthy, but Shoba found Balu's wife Akila there sobbing. "My husband," said Akila "told me last night that he married you at Trichy." "Adhe," replied Shoba, meaning yes, and showed a chain around her neck as proof. Prema tore the chain away and went into hysterics. After that, Prema made every effort, particularly psychological, to break the relationship.

And of course, lurid stories spread about Balu and Shoba. The couple began getting shunned; they were losing the few friends that they had. But the thing that Shoba feared most was losing Balu, who had become her whole life. Under pressure from everyone else, she clung even more firmly to him. On several occasions some of her relatives threatened to harm Balu. Her invariable reply was, "Don't do it...if you do so I will kill myself."

Hounded by society, abused by her family and other self-proclaimed guardians of morality, ridiculed by the Press and misunderstood by her own parents, Shoba eventually jumped off the edge of the precipice which her life had become.

One question which seems baffling is why her parents objected so much to the Sobha-Balu affair. Money could not be the only reason. After all, they themselves had eloped, and Menon had deserted a wife and four children to marry Prema. Then why? "Because," replied Menon, "I am wiser after the event. Today, my children by my first marriage hate me. I did not want this to happen to Shoba. She too asked me the same question. My reply was that 99 per cent of such marriages end up in a mess. Shoba then said 'I will be among the one per cent which succeeds'."

In the end she didn't give herself the chance to prove that statement. On the piece of paper on which her future had been written by the astrologer, Balu had scribbled his own prediction. "After some years you will slowly forget your Balu uncle. That will be the saddest day for him."

Shoba did not forget her Balu, uncle.

Balu: his love story

'DID BALU MAHENDRA KILL SHOBA?' screamed the headline in a Tamil newspaper. The cradle-snatcher has turned a murder! yelled a person from the rapidly growing crowd before a stucco building in West K. K. Nagar in central Madras, where Shoba lay spreadeagled on the floor of her bedroom. Dead Her mother, Priema screamed, murder, not certain.

Balu Mahendra graduated in physics, but his love for the cinema took him to the Poona Film Institute, where he ended up with the gold medal in 1966. He soon became one of the most acclaimed cinematographers in the country and in 1978 he won the national award. He also established a reputation as a writer

director editor in southern films, and at the age of 36 he had become very successful indeed.

But for the last couple of years, his love affair with Shoba, who was less than half his age, had created a scandal in the South. Mahendra was already a married man, with a child by his first wife. He had first met Shoba when he was already a successful filmmaker and she was just a child in plays. She used to call him 'uncle', and she did not stop calling him 'uncle' even after their friendship had turned into love, and they had openly declared that they were now living as man and wife. But the self-appointed guardians of morality cried in protest. Shoba's family refused to accept him, among other

things, if Shoba went ahead and officially married him, they would lose control over the income which Shoba was bringing in. The tension finally proved too much for Shoba to bear.

Shocked, grieved, and fearful of physical reprisals, Balu (BM to his few friends) went into hiding at his cousin's house in Mylapore after Shoba's suicide. SUNDAY finally caught up with him at producer Harry Pothen's office on May 5, and Balu told his story during a long five-hour chat. It was the first time that he was telling it, and the emotion and anguish of a tormented man who had lost the person he loved more than his life, will be evident to the reader. Here is his love story, in his own words.

My first recollections of Ammu—that was what I called Shoba—was when she loved to be called as of a puny little girl dandling from the arm of a production executive friend at Asoknagar supermarket way back in 1961. Somehow, I felt I had known her for years. I can still hear her cheek. I said, Hello. She answered, Hello, uncle. Instantly, rapport was established.

After Shoba's family moved to the street next to my residence in Asoknagar, whenever I passed the street she would come running to the gate screaming, Hi, uncle. I was then working on a project with director Bharani and writer Padmaraja for the filming of *Rathi Natchanam*, a story of the sexual awakening of a girl. The year 1972, but who would play the role of the girl? Immediately Ammu came to my mind.

I then decided to undertake a screen test of Sobha. Dressed in a gorgeous sarree and made up heavily on her face, she came to Bharani's office one afternoon with her mother, Priema, for the test. "Wipe your face clean," I told Ammu. To date, I have not exposed a single frame on a character wearing make-up. Years later, Ammu told me that she was very cross with me on that day. "I thought, you were a nut or a fake or both," she confessed. But when I saw her for the first time through the lenses I was stunned by the structure, the mobility and the glow on her face. So enchanted was I, so overwhelmed that I held on for quite some time before clicking the shutter. The tests came out very well. I told her, "You are going to be a great artiste. She was thrilled. "Uncle, do you really believe it?" she asked nervously. Yes, I really did.

But, *Rathi Natchanam* never got started the way we had visualised it originally. (Subsequently a drastically altered version was released under the title 'The Sexy Dreams' in places outside Kerala without either me or



T. Vasanthan

Shoba in it). Both of us, however, landed a job soon in a Telugu film, *Taram Marandi*, which took us to a remote Andhra village. Then came the devastating cyclone, and we were marooned in an abandoned house. Here, Shoba became very attached to me. She would always be near me. Would not eat without me. Ask all sorts of questions. Drag me out to show me a tiny little flower or a flock of birds or the patterns of clouds in the sky. I had to laugh when she laughed, pamper her when she sulked.

During our next shooting schedule, at Mithala Palace in Vijaywada, Shoba and I walked along the banks of the river Krishna, and sat on verdant fields watching monkeys for hours. When the colours changed in the sky, Ammu would say, "Look, uncle, it is going to be orange now." "No, it is going to be crimson," I would reply. Watching the drifting clouds she would turn and say, "Uncle, it's a rabbit." To me perhaps it might look more like a deer. We

had already become so very dependent on each other.

When the shooting concluded, I realised that this girl was one of the finest talents on the Indian screen, and I thought it was my obligation to nourish her, bring the best out of her and, above all, prevent her from straying into the snakepit that the movie business is. Both of us also felt that we could not live without each other. But, believe me when I say that then I loved her like she was my elder daughter—an elder sister to my son Gawrahankai. There was absolutely nothing else at that stage.

When I found out that she had stopped going to school and her private tuition had been discontinued, I thought I would become her teacher. I told her that it was not enough to become an actress, even a successful one. I wanted her to be a fully rounded person, educated, articulate, well-mannered and not just a woman selling her face or the bust or body. "One does not acquire class or character, one is born with them. You are born with class and must therefore ensure that you grow up with it," I told her one day as she sat before me scanning the history book I had purchased for her. Not just history, I introduced her to the English language, to the fiction and folklore of various places, geography, politics, films, art, theatre, and fashion. She used to talk loudly. I told her that decent ladies talked clearly, definitely and softly. After that, she never ever talked loudly. She picked up enough English to develop an interest in paperbacks and western pop music. Not yet sixteen, she was already blossoming.

It was then that I decided to do a Kannada film—*Kokila*—with Kamalhasan (who is the Amitabh Bachchan of the South) and Shoba. The script called for a healthier heroine, and Ammu was so fragile. To find out if she would physically match the character, I decided to take a few stunts. The results excellent. Look-

ing back, however, I feel that even if she had not looked great, I would have had cast her anyway. Ammu was nervous about it. "Maybe you should find someone else. This is your first directorial venture, and I don't want to let you down," she said. "No, not even for the fortunes of King Solomon," I replied.

Kokila was also Shoba's introduction to film production. I felt that an actress must know her medium well and I started teaching her all that I learnt at the Poona Film Institute. Soon Shoba knew all there was to know about the theoretical aspect of filmmaking. And, between us there developed an intense and intimate kind of relationship, without it being physical. We could even hear the music in silence.

We were thrown together again in a Tamil film, *Mullam Malarum* (Flower and the Thorn) which was shot mostly at Sringeri. One day, while we were driving to the location, our driver missed the turn in a dense fog and we got lost. As we waited for the fog to clear, Ammu suddenly clutched my arm and begged: "Uncle, let's stay here. Let's not get back anywhere". I wished we could.

We had already begun thinking of each other as each other's shadows. She became my motivation for all my creative efforts. And she was also one of my severest critics. But whenever I did a good job she would come to me, and tell me in my ears: "Uncle, you are great". Her education in film-making also continued, by the time the film had been completed, Ammu had acquired enough expertise to direct a film competently, eminently and independently. The reason she did not was it would have had hampered her career as an actress.

I was during the shooting of *Manavari Panavara*, a Telugu film that a new kind of relationship blossomed spontaneously between us. Initially, we were really disturbed. I was a married man with a child. I had been telling all the world that Ammu was my daughter. How would I now say something else? How would our families react? Those were traumatic days. Finally we decided, to hell with what others thought. What mattered most was us. However, we agreed that we would not break up anybody or anything.

It was love and adoration of an intense kind. No man or woman could love each other as much as we did. To her I was the universe. To me she was my soul, my breath, my existence. By this time, sly rumours had started circulating; people were conjuring up lurid dreams about us. Some of it reached gossip columns.

Our next venture together was a Malayalam film *Ul Kaal*. She insisted that every morning and evening I should pray with her for at least ten minutes in the puja room in her house. During one of those prayers, one morning, she held my hand and muttered: "In the name of Guruvayappa, I take my uncle as my every-



Shoba's bereaved mother, Prema

thing—father, mother, husband. Never will we be separated. Never ever". I also felt that way. "Ammu," I told her, "I am yours forever". We knew in our hearts that our souls had merged.

Meanwhile, the rumour mills, fuelled by persistent claims from Shoba's family that our relationship was that of a father and daughter, went on spinning out stories of an incestuous relationship. We were in a dilemma. Should we publicly tell the truth and scotch the rumours? Finally, we decided we needed a little more time to prepare ourselves.



K. P. Menon, Shoba's father

Besides we were looking forward to working together in a Tamil film *Karayellam Shanbagappou* (Forest of Flowers), and there was the lurking fear that if we came out with the truth, our chances might be jeopardised. Ultimately we could not make this film because only three weeks before the shooting was to start the producer wanted the hero Pratap Rathi to be replaced. I told him I that would rather seek another project, another producer than change Rathi. I had nothing else in particular in mind. But I knew that I must launch a project on July 1.

On the sets of *Aziatha Kolungal* (The Incomplete Melodies)

Balu Mahendra was the director and Shoba, the associate director



1979, the date fixed for the launching of the *Shanbaguppo*. Through a friend I approached the producer Gowrishankar. Would he like me to do a film for him? "What's the script?" he asked. I said I did not have any, but I had dates from Shoba and Pratap.

During one of those idle evenings when I was talking about my childhood memories, Ammu exclaimed: "Uncle, why don't you make a film on it". Yes, I would. Immediately, I sat down to write the script. And, that was how *Aziatha Kolungal* (The Incomplete Melodies) was conceived.

In the last week of June, 1979, Shoba was out shooting at a village in Trichy for a Tamil film *Sakkazathi* (The Other Wife). I was not working in that film. But one day I just dropped into the village to see how she was doing. It suddenly struck me that we could also shoot our film *Aziatha Kolungal* in this very village. Ammu stayed on as I returned to Madras to organise my unit for the shooting. We joined her in the village on June 30. That evening, Ammu told me: "Uncle, I would like you to marry me at the village temple, tie a *thali* (sacred thread) around my neck. I will feel more safe that way".

The next day, July 1, we woke up

Health You will maintain good health only from your 25th year. Tell those minor troubles and bother you. You will be independent in your thought and action from your 20th year. You will resist authority and decide things for yourself. In your life you always crave for affection and love.

Shoba's horoscope. On it Balu had scrawled: "Someday you will forget your Balu uncle, and that will be the saddest day for him".

early, bathed and went to the village temple. There I tied the sacred chain around her neck and we told each other that from now onwards we were man and wife. She touched my feet murmuring: "I am yours, yours and yours". I echoed the same sentiments. A few others too had come along with us. Among them was Jyothi (Prema's younger brother).

But none of them could guess what was going on. For, whenever we initiated a film, I would present her a gift and she would acknowledge it by touching my feet.

The ceremonies over, the shooting started. When I told Ammu that she was formally the Associate Director she glowed with happiness. She was always involved. She would now touch my arm, then stroke my hair. At times I would flare up. "Look, don't disturb me". "Sorry, sorry," she would say, clinging to me even more firmly.

Prema's allegations

DESPITE Shoba's mother's repeated claims that her daughter was murdered, the police inclined to go by the suicide theory. The coroner's verdict was death by hanging and though Prema claims that Shoba's eyes were not open and her tongue was not protruding, it is evident from some of the pictures taken earlier that Shoba's eyes were indeed half open and the tongue was protruding slightly. It is quite likely that Shoba's father closed the eyes when Balu rushed to the police station and Prema herself has admitted that she touched the body to remove the mangal sutra chain. So it isn't surprising that the body was not found right under the fan hook.

Prema claims that Balu borrowed heavily from film industry people and he owed considerable amount of money to people but this correspondent could not find anybody in the industry who supported Prema's views. Balu Mahendra is reputed to be a moody and difficult person but he hasn't been accused of extravagant spending, gambling or drinking. In fact his producers vouch for his spartan existence as testified by Gowrishankar of Devi Films who produced his *Aziatha Kolungal*.

Prema's belief that Balu Mahendra used to beat his wife on the road outside their new house also seems absurd. Incidentally city

police have received a note, which was purported to be written by Shoba, one full week after her death. Prema claims that she saw an Alfred Hitchcock collection of stories in Shoba's bedroom: "Somebody read the book and murdered my daughter."

However Pratap Pothen says that he had given the book to Shoba.

Among the titles on the shelf in the bedroom there was *Murder: And How To Escape Murder*.

Much has been made of the Rs 10,000 Shoba received from a film producer around April 30. Prema has made a big issue of the missing money. According to Balu the police took the briefcase containing the money and other notes and after glancing through them handed it over to him. Balu wants to return the money to the producer concerned despite Prema's claims that he has no claim to Shoba's money and property. Says Balu: "All I want of Shoba's are a few souvenirs. She used to keep a rosary attached to her bra and used to carry a ring with my name on it. I want those items and if possible a set of clothes which are not washed. I want to preserve them in her sacred memory. The parents are welcome to take whatever belongs to her otherwise".

To set at rest all speculations the Tamil Nadu Governor Prabhudas Patwari ordered a full-scale probe into the matter on May 9.

BY NOW, Shoba's family was aware of our deep attachment to each other, and was upset because they could see that they were losing Shoba, who was the sole bread earner. Her mother, Prema, would caution her against becoming too intimate with me. To this her reply, invariably, would be, "Mummy, if you ask me to run nude all over Madras, I will do so, but don't tear me apart from my uncle". At this point, we decided that we should make a clean breast of the truth to our families. We told both our families that we were already married, emphasising that we were not going to disown our obligations to them.

They did not understand us. Later, though, my wife reconciled herself to this. "I do not approve of the arrangement. But I do not know how I can stop it. I have been your wife for eleven years. Only see that you do not leave us, do not starve us," she said. I would not. But, Shoba's family, especially her mother, was more difficult. For them I was a scourge, a cancer. Nevertheless, I went to Shoba's place every day to spend most of my time there. To me it was Ammu's house. And so I did not mind the insults.

As we were preparing for our next Tamil movie, *Moodu Pani* (The Mist), we felt that our families were hoping that somehow someday we would break up. To underline that we would not, we thought, we must make a public announcement of our relationship. On January 22, 1980, in

the morning, I received Ammu at the railway station. She was returning from an outdoor shooting in Calcutta. We drove with her father to her place. I was in a hurry to go to the Gemini studios for the recording of a song that would launch our project *Moodu Pani* formally. Ammu said that she would also come. After a quick wash and change she hopped into my car with one of her aunts, Rema. Even at this point we were not contemplating making a public announcement about our marriage. But a remark, "now or never," from a newsman at Gemini made up our minds. We asked some newsmen for lunch at Hotel Chola. "But before that," I told them, "I seek your forgiveness for telling you all these years that we were uncle and niece. Yes, for a time we were. But now we are man and wife. Please," I said, "have sympathy for us". But, apparently, many did not, for the journalists blew up the event to provide the juiciest scandal story of the day.

For the next two days we lived in Chola. On the evening of January 24, before leaving for Bangalore, I drove Ammu to her house so that she could inform her family members that she was going out. "We owe it to them," I said. She went in as I sat in the drawing room outside, with her family members occasionally popping out to gape and frown at me. The ordeal was over in ten minutes when Shoba came out of her mother's room.

We shot in Bangalore for five days, between January 25 and 30. But midway, Ammu had to rush back to Madras for a day's patchwork. But where would she stay in Madras? Staying in a hotel unescorted was out of question. Staying with friends could inspire fresh rumormongers. I suggested that she should go to her parents' house. She agreed reluctantly. Later, she told me that the reception was very lavish but artificial. "I was feeling suffocated there," she said. "We will prove by our conduct that we have not come together for cheap sexual pleasure or for money. Reason must triumph," I consoled her.

When we returned to Madras on January 31, I again drove her to her house. She would not go. "Please, uncle, don't leave me there. Find a house. I don't mind even if it is just a bare room without any kitchen or privacy," she cried. But a good place is not easy to find. So, we suffered the insults and the humiliations, and she stayed at her parents' place.

One day I brought Ammu home at around 11.30 p.m. Our normal routine was that after I had reached Ammu home she would have a wash and a change and then sit on the steps with me, talking for another thirty minutes or so before we kissed goodbye. But, on that day she came out almost as soon as she had gone in. She just put her head on my shoulders and started crying. "Uncle, I have taken some tablets. I am going to die," she said. Immediately, we took her to the eminent physician of the city, Dr Parimalam,

son of Iyannu Naidu's patriarch, Annadurai. There we discovered that there was nothing to worry about. Nevertheless, she certainly was going through a state of tension.

After our return from Bangalore we found out that all but Rs 500 of her bank balance had been taken away. Before her departure she said, she had left a few signed blank cheques at her place so that in case of emergency the family members could use them. Ammu was furious. For, we had already decided among ourselves that half of her income should go to her family. We should try to ascertain how much money was required to run her household, and perhaps we could add another one thousand to it and send the amount to Menon every month. I said, But when she wanted to know what were the usual family expenses, her mother flared up. "Why do you ask for an account now? Never before did you ask for it," her mother said. Ammu replied: "Now that I'm married, my husband must know what I do with my money." "Husband? Marriage? Who says you are married?" Premma shot back. To this Ammu's answer was: "Mummy, what do you know of marriage?". She did say a few other things which cannot be repeated. The gulf had widened when Premma had torn the *thali* from Ammu's neck after she had exhibited this as evidence of her marriage a few months ago. Now the breach was complete. Ammu left the house with just the saree she was wearing. We rented a room at the Hotel Atlantic.

AFTER a couple of days she went back to her place to ask for some of her jewellery she needed for maintaining the continuity in *Moodu Pani*. They are in the bank and are not immediately available," Premma told her. For a moment she stood there on the doorsteps frozen. Then walked out on to the road swearing never to see her mother again. She never did again.

On April 1, when we heard that Shoba had bagged the national award, we did not believe at first. But when we got confirmation from an editor friend, we lifted Ammu high, hugged her, kissed her and wept. When I was in Delhi in 1978 to collect my national award, some-

No man or woman could love each other as much as we did. To her I was the universe. To me, she was my soul, my breath, my existence.

body had told me that if I made a wish before the torch at the India Gate, it would be fulfilled. My wish: a national award for my Ammu in 1980.

That very evening, there was a Press preview for the release of *Kokila* — in Madras. But nobody bothered to invite us there. So, we thought, we would have the evening all by ourselves dining out and viewing a special projection of the film *Raji Enn Kanmani* (Raji, My Sweet-heart) at the Gemini. We also found a place for ourselves where we moved in on April 2. For the first seven or eight days I stayed most of the time with Shoba so that she did not feel lonely. Once in a while I would go to my old place to see my first wife Akila and the son. But when Akila fell ill, I told Ammu that I would shuttle between the two houses staying one night here and another there. I also told her that this was just a temporary arrangement till Akila recovered. Ammu was not happy about it and even sulked but yielded when I reminded of our vows not to abandon our families and promised to spend only the alternative nights with Akila. The rest of the time I said, is all yours.

On April 22, we left for Delhi to receive Ammu's award. Those few days in Delhi were one of our finest moments of our lives. When she wanted to ride a auto-rickshaw I would hire it by the day. Another day, we climbed all the way to the top of the Qutub Minar to scream out, "Love is life". We also bought some books. At a bookshop Ammu picked up a fat glossy volume on childcare. The price: Rs 160. "Can I have this book?", she asked. I bought it for her.

Ammu desperately wanted to have a baby. But we thought we should defer it for another two years or so because she was too young and also because it might hinder our career. Sometimes she would say, "To hell with our work, let's have the baby". Even on the day she died, the last conversation that I had had with her was about the baby. When she blew her last kiss to me, I could see her clutching the baby-care book in her hand. I just cannot think, she is dead. I would rather like to think that she had gone for shooting to an outdoor location, far far away beyond the stars. But, why does not she take me there?"

Only a few weeks before her death, Shoba had told SUNDAY, "Mammamma", journalists were trying to find her up, with up and coming filmmaker Pratap Puthen who had courted with her for two recent films. She also spoke of her intention to get married. She said, "I know what I want in life and my association with Behu is a great step to my mind and heart and my existence." After a while she added, "He was, he is and he will be my pole star for life."

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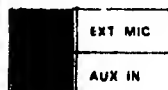


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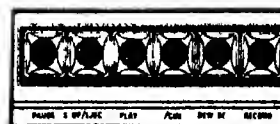
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Shoba's last hours



Shoba lying on the floor of her bedroom (photograph not taken immediately after death)

APRIL 30. At about 9 am Balu leaves the house to be at the editing table in the studio. Shoba tells him she will join him in the studios around 11 am but does not turn up. Balu returns home, takes lunch with her. Then takes her for some shopping. She selects curtains for their house. Balu goes back to work, she for the facials.

In the evening around 7.30 pm film actor Pratap Pothan drops in. She pats her cheek and asks him: "How do I look? Do you think I am looking healthier?" They spend about an hour or so chatting, when Pratap bids her good night. But, she asks him to wait for sometime more. "Where is your uncle/husband? When will he be back?", he asks her. "I just do not know. He may not even come if he goes there (Akila's house). But, I am not jealous", she says. As they talk some obnoxious calls come, pouring threats and profanities. At 8.45 pm Pratap leaves.

Around 9.30 Balu returns. They dine together and talk for some time about the remake of *Kokila*—Balu's much vaunted maiden Tamil hit—in Malayalam. There was to be a discussion on the subject the next day with producer

Harry Pothan and writer Dr Pavitraran after they had seen the Tamil version which was to be released at the Leo Theatre. She suggests going to a temple near Kovalam as a thanksgiving gesture, the next morning. Balu tells her, it has to be postponed till the afternoon, or else he may miss the meeting with Pothan and Pavitraran. She is grumpy, but says, okay. In the evening Shoba was to be felicitated by the producers of her award winning film *Pasi*. Balu tells her that if they left for the temple around 3 pm they would be back in time for the felicitations. He also tells her that he will go to the programme because he loved to accompany her but he will not speak even if he is asked to. "The way they are treating us, just makes me vomit. Look at the ads where you have been shown pregnant and across your belly is the blurb changing with every week—the first week, the second week, the third week", Balu says. Then she tells him about her desires to bear a child for him. "Raja, I really want to have that baby", she says. Then a few exchanges about Balu's going to his first wife's place that night. "No, I do not mind you going there. But, I feel so very lonely. Abandoned, when you are not with me" she

says. Balu pats her on the cheek, kisses. Leaves for Akila's place around 10.45 pm. Before the departure he talks for sometime about the two pictures she had signed on that day. Shoba spends the night crying.

May 1. Balu returns to Shoba at 9 pm. She is not in the bedroom. Not in the kitchen. She is performing the pujas. Balu picks up his shaving kit. After shaving, he calls out "Ammu, I am hungry". She comes. Places breakfast. Feed one another. A telephone call comes. It's one of Shoba's relatives. He has fixed up a TV set for them at a throwaway price. Should he bring it now? "Perhaps, it will be better if you brought it in the afternoon, we can test it then or if you want you can bring it even now", Balu says. Balu leaves at around 10 am telling her he will be back for lunch and will go to Kovalam in the afternoon. After he leaves, one of Shoba's cousins, Prakash, drops in to talk about the TV. Just at that time Shoba, leafing through a baby care book, asks her maid Vasanthi, to get her a stool. But without waiting for her answer she says she will find one herself. Vasanthi goes out to meet Prakash. On returning she finds the bedroom door bolted. The Curtain.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Saga of Kamdeo Singh



The story of Kamdeo Singh, surely the most powerful dacoit and smuggler in the country as long as he lived, is a fascinating one. Starting as an impoverished bullock cart driver, he became by the early 1960s, a multimillionaire with a smuggling operation worth crores. But that was not the only source of his power. From his village in the Begusarai district of Bihar, he played a vital role in the politics of his state. He built up a Robin Hood image, and without his support politicians found it impossible to win elections in the district (not merely did he control votes, but he also used guns). And so when the news came that Kamdeo Singh had been shot in a police encounter on April 18, the first reaction was one of disbelief. SUNDAY sent its reporters to put together the story of an astonishing life.



The bullock cart driver

THERE was nothing remarkable about the rickety bullock cart which wheeled its way from Nayagaon to Begusara. In Bihar sometime in 1950. Nothing remarkable, except for the driver. His personality immediately caught the eye. Of average height, he had a powerful muscular frame, and wore a gamcha round his head. He was a poor man, and by carrying coal on his cart he barely managed two square meals a day. This was not surprising: Begusara was an extremely poor Bihar district, controlled by merciless zamindars. The poverty and the feudalism had attracted a communist movement since 1930. But it was only after the setting up of the Begusara thermal power station, a fertiliser factory at nearby Barauni oil refineries and a butter-manufacturing unit that the power of feudalism began to be eroded, and standards of living improved. And the Communist Party became powerful in the region.

But while industrialisation picked up pace in and around Begusara, the bullock cart driver continued to carry coal. By 1954, this man had become the leader of bullock cart drivers in the area, and soon he was collecting a levy of one rupee from each driver to fight their causes: it was a rough mixture of bossism and unionism. And in one instance this man took on the feared Raghunandan Jha, the local zamindar. This had never happened before. More dramatically, he won the battle for the bullock cart drivers. It was a small, symbolic victory, but it immediately converted the leader into a local hero. His name became known. In 1956 his name was mentioned in a breathtaking dacoity.

In 1956 too, the lowly bullock cart driver was often seen carrying a metal box on his head or a small bundle under his arm. And soon it became known that he was smuggling ganja (cannabis) and had become a member of a criminal gang. His bullock cart driver friends now came in handy. By the end of 1960, personal friends and enemies, policemen and customs officials, all knew him as a smuggler who operated on the Indo-Nepal border. It also became known that he was forming his own exclusive gang. In 1963, the first case of smuggling was registered against his name. By the October of the same year, the first case of murder was registered against him.

By 1965, he had become big. Taxis and trucks now carried his contraband which were no longer limited to ganja. He found that foreign cosmetics, electronic goods and luxury items in general had a good market in India. He used small boats to ferry his goods. According to police estimates, his annual income in those days was around

Rs 50 lakhs. By 1970, he had built up a personal army of 500 men; among them were smugglers, killers, skilled swimmers, top class drivers, and of course professional goondas. A valuable addition to this gang was Ashwini Kumar, a deserter from the Indian army. He was a superb marksman and brought two stenguns along with him. At one time, Ashwini was declared dead after an "encounter" with the BDO (Block Development Officer) of Matihani. Years later, the district's superintendent of police discovered that Ashwini Kumar was alive and occupied a senior position in the gang.

Now the ex-bullock cart driver began to stock and use all varieties of firearms; rifles, stenguns and light machineguns. He acquired a fleet of jeeps and trucks which carried his contraband under false nameplates. These vehicles were registered under fictitious names. He also utilised his fleet of vehicles to carry contraband for other smugglers for a fee.

Then he became active in politics. He declared that he was opposed to the Communists, and would help anyone who opposed them. He hounded and terrorised Party workers. During the elections, his men began to capture booths for the Congress Party on a large scale. His men were capable of capturing at least 60 to 70 booths in a Vidhan Sabha constituency, thus virtually determining the result. Now politicians sought his support.

In a span of 12 years, the police registered 34 cases against his gang; he was personally accused in 19 cases. The crimes included smuggling, abduction, looting, possessing illegal firearms, violation of the Indian Explosives Act, hooch capturing and looting standing crops. The Bihar Government declared a reward of Rs 10,000 for his arrest. The Central Government seemed equally eager for his arrest under COFEPOSA and promised Rs 5,000 to any person who could nab him.

In 1974, after noisy exchanges in the Bihar Assembly, the state government entrusted the task of investigating the mafia lord's operations to the Question and Assurance Committee of the Vidhan Sabha. Their report was shocking. This man had managed to obtain contracts worth 50 lakhs from a number of government departments under fictitious names. According to a reliable source, even now he had contracts in Irrigation, electricity and PWD of the Bihar Government worth more than Rs 10 crores. Of course, these operations are benami (under fictitious names).

The man was called Kamdeo Singh. He was perhaps the country's most powerful dacoit, protected by politicians, feared by people. On April 18, he was shot dead in an encounter with the police. Till that day, the police did not even possess a photograph of Kamdeo Singh. During his lifetime, not a single photograph of his was available. He was illiterate and he never signed his name. Some poor people called him Robin Hood. But to most, his name spelled terror.

The Operation

KAMDEO SINGH'S mafia was four-tiered. At the top was the invisible Kamdeo himself. Next to him were the 26 senior organisers. The third tier comprised a 100 veteran criminals, and right at the bottom was a group of 400 youths, who chose dacoity instead of unemployment. Food and lodging were free for each member of the gang. In addition, a small allowance was provided for sundry expenses. The actual salaries were despatched to the "workers' families. This system helped Kamdeo Singh to keep each of his men's family in his clutches, and also provided the seeds of his personal mass base.

Kamdeo Singh was a very generous godfather; on such occasions as marriages, he would readily donate Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000 to any of his men. In return, the workers' family members acted as his informers. They kept a lookout for any stranger approaching Kamdeo Singh's village, Nayagaon, and inquiring about him. Nayagaon is roughly five km from Matihani and any casual visitor trying to reach Nayagaon would encounter at least a dozen small groups along the road; if there was suspicion about any stranger, the information was immediately passed to Nayagaon. Apart from such support, Kamdeo Singh had friends and sympathisers among criminals, intellectuals and politicians. And his caste was right: he was a Bhumihar in an area which was dominated by the Bhumihars. They saw him as a caste leader.

Kamdeo Singh's mafia had the Indo-Nepal border in its grip. It was virtually impossible for any other smuggler to operate in the area without the mafia's permission. Rival gangs had two options: either to pay a levy to Kamdeo, or use Kamdeo's fleet of vehicles for moving their contraband and pay him for it. In fact, carrying goods for other smugglers proved very profitable for Kamdeo's gang. It is estimated that Kamdeo owned nearly a hundred cars, jeeps, trucks, motorboats and motorcycles.

He used Saharsa, Purnea, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur and Patna as centres for his smuggling operations. In Nepal, he entrenched himself at Hanuman-nagar and Dalkola, and in UP Mughalsarai was his base. He hired a large number of godowns in Calcutta, Bombay, Kanpur and Jaipur under fictitious names. Smuggled goods were stored there.

Kamdeo Singh's smuggling operations followed an interesting pattern. After crossing the Nepal border, the goods would reach Gulab Bag's mandi (marketplace) in Purnea where the drivers and armed guards accompanying the convoy were changed. Fresh drivers and guards would then take the goods to Shuguri. From there another set of hands would take the convoy to Calcutta. Once in Calcutta,

trusted hands would transfer the goods to the godowns, most of which were hired under fictitious names. Arrests hardly made any difference because individuals knew too little about destinations and godowns. If caught, his men normally gave false statements to the police, and later these statements would conveniently disappear from police records.

To join the gang was easy but leaving it was difficult and risky. A doctor, who treated "workers" of the gang who were injured in encounters with the police, wanted to say goodbye to the gang, before he left, the fingers of his right hand were mutilated.

The mafia's brutal politics

IN the entire Begusarai belt, Kamdeo Singh projected himself as an enemy of the communists. This gradually led to the division of the population into two blocks; the pro-communists and the anti-communists. Kamdeo became the undisputed leader of the anti-communists and political parties opposed to the CPI made full use of him. After Kamdeo Singh's death on April 18, contestants who hoped to reach the Bihar Assembly under his protection gave up all hope of contesting. During every election, Kamdeo Singh's mafia would clash with CPI workers and capture booths for whoever opposed the CPI.

Kamdeo Singh's differences with the CPI had roots in his gangsterism. He would finance his smuggling by borrowing money from the rich farmers, the money would be returned with a handsome premium. Smuggling in fact, assumed the proportions of a cottage industry in Begusarai. On the other hand, the CPI also needed support from the affluent farmers (many CPI leaders belong to this class) who could give the party financial and electoral support. And then of course the CPI's ideology made it a natural enemy of Kamdeo Singh. Singh readily used violence to intimidate the CPI; his mafia would frequently kidnap or shout down its opponents in public places.

The CPI retaliated by building a parallel band of toughs comprised of rival smugglers and professional killers. The CPI's "softliners" in Bihar, including Suryanarayan Singh, MP, wanted to fight Kamdeo through the traditional apparatus of the police. But the younger elements of the CPI, the hardliners, demanded an eye for an eye, and organised their own gang. In 1974, a CPI MLA, Sitaram Mishra, was reportedly shot dead by Kamdeo's men. It is said that within months, the CPI returned the compliment by killing Kamdeo's elder brother, Ramdeo Mal. Mishra was shot dead on the road and Ramdeo was killed inside his own house. When Ravivar reported the Mishra murder case and blamed Kamdeo's gang for it, its correspondent, Arun Ranjan, was personally threatened by the gang for exposing the story.

A memorandum submitted to the Home Ministry by a CPI MP gave the names of men who were allegedly killed by Kamdeo's mafia; Lalan Singh, Babban Singh and Ramu Singh of Chak village; Sahjanand

Singh and Lakhandeo Singh of Mahendrapur; Sato Singh of Badalpur; Shankar Singh of Sonapur; Narayan Singh of Nayagaon; Rajendra Rai, Paro Yadav, Sukhi Yadav, Ramkisan Singh and Phulena Singh of Sihma; and Govind Sah of Chakaur. The memorandum alleged that these men were killed within the jurisdiction of Matihani police station. It was also alleged that Kamdeo was behind the murders of Sardar Mahendra Singh, a hotel owner, near Farakka, and of four policemen belonging to the excise department at Bhimnagar, of Sardar Kartar Singh of Purnea; Chatterjee of Salkia (near Howrah), and of three men belonging to the Yadav's community in Hanumannagar.

It is believed that Kamdeo's men were also responsible for the sensational murder of S. N. Dasgupta, a superintendent of excise police who was posted at Jaipur.

While he was posted at Calcutta, Dasgupta had seized goods worth more than a crore of rupees belonging to Kamdeo Singh. Fearing that his life was in danger, Dasgupta got himself transferred to Jaipur. One day, in Jaipur, while returning home, he was shot dead by two men who were coming in a rickshaw from the opposite direction.

On May 29, Harijan bustee in Rajadumri was attacked by Singh's men. One person was killed and several injured. In June 1978, the mafia was reportedly responsible for burning down Khuthagaon which is in the jurisdiction of Barbahia thana. In the last six months, the mafia attacked Sihma village at least five times. The CPI cadre resisted such attacks. In the last 12 years, 40 CPI workers have been killed. In the encounters, and another 50 people have also died. The mafia itself has lost at least 30 men.

The only important Congress leader who issued a public statement after Kamdeo's death was L. P. Shahi. Shahi's statement points an accusing finger at the communists. He said: "During the last one year, more than 150 people have been murdered in the Begusarai belt. The eradication of Kamdeo Singh will not solve the problem. The Government should bring an end to murders and dacoities in buses and trains which are carried out under the supervision of a particular political group".

The Congress has been divided in its attitude to Kamdeo Singh. The pro-CPI faction in the Congress was against Kamdeo Singh. In March 1980, when Suryanarayan Singh and his party workers offered a dharna at the Begusarai district headquarters demanding the end of Kamdeo Singh and his mafia, he was supported by pro-CPI Congressmen. When the Union Home Minister came to Patna, these politicians demanded police action against Kamdeo. At the same time, Congressmen opposed to the CPI requested reporters of national newspapers to send despatches on the violence perpetuated by the CPI in Bihar to balance the pressure, that was building up against Kamdeo Singh in the Home Ministry.



illagers in Begusarai district pay homage to victims of Kamdeo's gang

Encounter with the police



Crowds outside the Begusarai thana waiting to catch a glimpse of Kamdeo Singh's body

IT is said that any inspector who joined the Matihani police station would, at the beginning of his term, go to Naya-gaon and pay his respects to Kamdeo Singh. During the last 30 years, only one police officer had the courage to oppose Kamdeo Singh. He was Ram Chandra Khan, an IPS officer who became superintendent of Begusarai (Khan is now the assistant inspector general of police, Bihar). In 1973, when the CPI was very close to Mrs Gandhi, the Prime Minister asked Abdul Ghafoor, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, to destroy Kamdeo Singh's mafia. The Chief Minister stated on the floor of the Assembly that he had appointed Mr R. C. Khan as the superintendent of police, Begusarai.

At that time Kamdeo Singh's gang would extract payments from vehicles plying on national highway number 31. Khan was personally responsible for stopping this system of private taxation. In those days, members of Singh's gang would assemble in Begusarai town almost every day. They were easily identifiable; each would carry a red *gamcha* on his shoulder: this was their symbol. Khan ordered all of them to be arrested (a few innocents also got nabbed in the process). Feeling the heat, Kamdeo Singh fled to Nepal.

R. C. Khan wanted Kamdeo Singh, dead or alive. He selected a few trusted officers and constables and went to Nepal: they disguised themselves as sadhus. When they reached Nepal, they learnt to their dismay that the place where Kamdeo Singh was residing was under the control of the Nepalese army. Arms would have to be used to arrest Kamdeo Singh and this was impossible. The "sadhus" had to return empty handed and in low spirits.

Kamdeo Singh, however, was eventually arrested in March 1974 at Rajbiraj in Nepal. India demanded his extradition. Khan made five trips to Nepal to bring Kamdeo Singh to an Indian jail. Valuable time was lost in paperwork and bureaucratic exchanges. When, in June, the Bihar police team finally reached the Nepali prison, it found a fake Kamdeo Singh in the cell. The real Kamdeo Singh had been let off. This was allegedly a reward for a political favour he did to the Nepalese authorities.

According to one estimate, Kamdeo Singh's gang had 13 major encounters with the police in which three of his men died and between 15 and 20 were injured.

Death of a godfather

ON April 18 when news arrived at the state police headquarters in Patna that Kamdeo Singh had been killed in a police encounter on that day at around 11.00 a.m., top officials could not believe their ears. Immediately, a police team led by Mr D. N. Sahay, DIG, CID, left for Begusarai to verify the news.

The police version of the encounter is as following: On April 18, Naya-gaon village was surrounded on three sides by central reserve policemen. Exactly at 11 a.m. in the morning, policemen mounted on horses entered the village. Seeing this, Kamdeo Singh and his men started fleeing towards the river. The police ordered them to halt, throw down their weapons and surrender. Only nine complied. Kamdeo Singh, being a good swimmer himself, jumped into the river. The water in the river, at that time, was only chest-high. The special police task force opened fire. One bullet hit Kamdeo Singh at the back of his head and presumably killed him. For two hours, however, no policemen ventured to go near the corpse. Later, with the help of a net, the dead body was dragged out of the river.

Our investigations revealed that on the night of April 17, a dance was organised at Naya-gaon on the occasion of Bhada Singh's son's tilak (Bhada Singh is a senior member of the Kamdeo mafia). The villagers, awake all night enjoying themselves, slept late that morning. As was his

habit, Kamdeo Singh was resting in a small hut on the outskirts of the village. A servant was massaging his legs.

Three CRP parties surrounded Naya-gaon by 11 a.m. A little before 11, the commandant of the mounted police felt that his men should proceed towards the village. Three horsemen went on, a little ahead of the others. On the outskirts, one policeman found himself in front of Kamdeo Singh's little hut. Hearing the sound of hooves, Kamdeo Singh told his masseur to go, and stopped out. One mounted policeman caught him by the hair and asked him his name. Instead of replying, Kamdeo fisted the horse's nose with tremendous force, knowing full well it was a vulnerable spot. The horse bolted, and taking advantage of the momentary confusion, Kamdeo began running towards the river. In spite of repeated warnings by the police to stop, he kept running on and, reaching the river, jumped in. The river bank was high, and Kamdeo Singh hurt a leg when he dived. Then a bullet hit the back of his head. He plunged underwater, but failed to surface. Normally, armed bodyguards with a boat would always be ready for just such an emergency, but today Kamdeo's bodyguards were less than alert. By the time they heard the firing, it was too late. They threw their weapons into the river and they surrendered.

As is inevitable, some doubts have been raised about this police version, and some people allege that Kamdeo Singh was ambushed and killed in cold blood. Since there was a reward on Kamdeo's head, policemen squabbled among themselves as to who had actually killed him. Harjinder Singh, DSP, CRPF, told the Press that he had shot Kamdeo. To end the bickering, the Government decided to divide the cash reward among the entire team.

A hero's farewell

TWENTY-five thousand people came to pay their last respects while the body of Kamdeo Singh lay in Begusarai thana, awaiting cremation. It was virtually as if the body was lying in state, and the final mark of honour was given by the local Congressmen who wrapped the body in a tricolour on its last journey. Kamdeo Singh was called one of two names in Begusarai: either "maalik" or "company". And, in classic godfather style, Kamdeo Singh provided protection and help to the people of Begusarai who not only gave him a home but also their loyalty.

We travelled to Naya-gaon, which is 11 km. from Begusarai and three kilometres from the Matihani thana, by jeep, but the vehicle could

Could Kamdeo have surrendered?



Kamdeo Singh's men in lock-up

ACCORDING to very reliable sources, Kamdeo Singh had made up his mind to surrender but political vested interests came in his way. Kamdeo Singh along with other smugglers, wanted to surrender to JP (in the fashion of the Madhya Pradesh dacoits) and start a new life. During May 1979, a few people met the Bihar CM, Ram Sundar Das, on behalf of Kamdeo Singh. At that time, 19 cases involving Kamdeo were pending in the courts: in two of them Singh was accused of murder.

After discussions with the state authorities, Ram Sundar Das made it known to Singh's relatives on August 8, 1979, that surrender was possible. At that time Kamdeo Singh was in Nepal, and it was decided to give him a week's time

to give himself up. Eventually, he was given a little more time, and the first week of September was fixed for Kamdeo's surrender. But a political conspiracy was hatched to stop the surrender. For two reasons. First, some Janata leaders felt that if the CM, Ram Sundar Das, could make Kamdeo Singh "respectable" Das could become too powerful to challenge, and dislodging him would be impossible. Second, too many politicians would lose their leverage with an outlawed Kamdeo Singh: he would no longer need their protection. Lastly, the CPI, which had waged such a long and bloody war with Kamdeo Singh, had no desire to see him become an acceptable figure in state politics: his surreptitious role was already bad enough.

not go on the last kilometre because the road was totally unsuitable. We entered the village on foot. Nayagaon seemed a fairly prosperous place. It had the usual mix of upper caste bhumihars, backwards and outcastes. We came across a one-storeyed brick house, in front of which a jeep was parked. There was a special out-house in which at least 50 people could sleep comfortably. Twenty sacks of flour and ten sacks of sugar were kept there, to feed the Kamdeo Singh family".

Kamdeo Singh's death was being mourned by the villagers; their god-father was gone. A group of harijans told us, "He was a devata to us. Now who will look after us? It is as if one of our limbs has been cut off". A brahmin of the village commented with a flourish: "The pride of Bihar is dead". People began telling stories about Kamdeo Singh's virtues. An old man remembered: "Kamdeo Singh was the youngest of four brothers, and he had no vices. He did not smoke, drink, or eat meat. One of his nephews also used to maintain a small, subsidiary gang of his own. One day Kamdeo Singh heard that this nephew had abducted a woman, and kept her in his house. He immediately went to the nephew and said that "if this was the kind of behaviour that his men displayed then the gang could not last".

Kamdeo Singh's old mother, his wife and an adolescent son (studying in an English medium school) survive him. There is sadness in the house, and in the village. No one is feeling like saying anything; no one is asking any questions; and one can feel the tension in the air. And this tension is not limited to the village Nayagaon alone; it spreads through the whole of Begusarai.

Because everyone also knows that the war between Kamdeo Singh's followers and the communists is not yet over: there will be at least one more violent round, and the blood will flow before the Assembly elections scheduled to be held by the end of May. Through a combination of fear, affection and that vitally strong caste loyalty, Kamdeo Singh could influence the results in at least eight Assembly constituencies. Now that he is gone, what will happen here? Will his gang still be able to capture booths? Will the Congress be able to cash in on Kamdeo Singh's name even after his death? The police believe that Singh's gang will collapse now, but they also point out that around 100 veteran criminals of his gang are still outside the grasp of the police. Section 144 has been imposed on the whole of Begusarai district, but both sides are preparing for what might be a decisive clash for political and social control over the district.

As we leave this sullen land, our guide tells us a story. There used to be a blind man who used to come to Kamdeo Singh's house every day to ask for food. Ever since Kamdeo Singh's death, nobody has seen that blind man.

Bahuguna Versus Sanjay

AFTER seeing the latest battle of the tickets in the Congress (I), some political observers have come to the conclusion that the days of the senior people are over in the Party. I personally think that this is a hasty conclusion. The days of the senior people are not over; it would be more appropriate to say that the days people considered "doubtful" by Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay are over. People whose loyalty is in doubt have no future in this organisation, however important they may appear otherwise. And the Party high command is very firm on this account now. Office and membership of the legislatures will be given only to the completely faithful.

It is not his age which made H. N. Bahuguna's position in the Congress (I) untenable. It was, rather, his reputation as a manoeuvrer. When Bahuguna was conspiring with Sanjay Gandhi and Kamal Nath against Charan Singh he perhaps thought that once he joined Mrs Gandhi's Party he would dominate it. But, first, the huge majority which the Congress (I) got in the Lok Sabha upset his calculations. A majority of only

**Power
and
Politics**



By BARUN SENGUPTA

15 or 20 for the Congress (I) would have ensured the power of a leader like Bahuguna with his 15 or so supporters in Parliament. Also, Bahuguna was confident that his rival, Kamalapati Tripathi's days were over, and he would be the most senior leader in the Party after Mrs Gandhi.

Before the elections, Bahuguna was made the secretary-general of the Congress (I), a special post specifically created for him. The designation gave him confidence. After the elections, Bahuguna demanded an important Ministry as reward for his support. That was when his disillusionment began. Mrs Gandhi was willing to give him something for the time being; but the son said no. Ultimately, it was agreed that Mr Bahuguna

would get something if he did not indulge in any "dirty tricks" during the UP elections.

Bahuguna was bitter since the formation of the Cabinet. How dare they exclude him! Sometimes, he expressed his bitterness in public also: one sign of his shifting loyalties was his decision to remove the portrait of Mrs Gandhi from his drawing room. He started touring UP to organise his supporters. He calculated that if he could organise the victory of about 25 people loyal to him in the Assembly elections, he could once again become the balancing factor in UP politics and use this as a bargaining chip at the Centre. But here Sanjay Gandhi stumbled him. He simply saw to it that too many of Bahuguna's men did not get the Party ticket. Now Bahuguna was desperate. He tried to manoeuvre, but failed. Sanjay did not budge an inch. Then Bahuguna decided to take his battle into the open—he resigned the secretary-generalship. In response, Sanjay Gandhi withdrew Party tickets from all the Bahuguna loyalists.

Basically, H. N. Bahuguna forgot that this was not the old Congress, where he could play one faction against the other. Bahuguna forgot that in this organisation there was no Charan Singh whom he could very easily play against Morarji (and vice versa). In today's Congress (I), there are no factional leaders worth anything. The high command of this Party is composed of two persons only, Mrs Gandhi and her son, and any attempt to play one against the other is not likely to succeed.

Had age been the factor, Kamalapati Tripathi would also have faced a Bahuguna-type situation. (He is older than Bahuguna.) But if, in the end, he has been able to get his son, Lokpati, and some of his followers the Party symbol, it is because his loyalty is not in question, even if his utility is occasionally in doubt.

In 1979, when news of Bahuguna's negotiations with Sanjay Gandhi and Kamal Nath for entry into the Congress (I) appeared in the Press, Sanjay was asked in a private conversation, 'Well, are you taking Bahuguna?'

Sanjay replied, 'Yes'.

'But you know him!'

'Yes, we know him. But we need him now?'

'But he will try to play his own games once he can get a foothold in your Party.'

Sanjay remarked: 'Let him try. We will then throw him out.'



A. Sengupta

LIVING

Doing the inn thing

The tourist season in Goa is over, and hotel beds are empty. Innkeepers in Goa are out of business and worse, most depressingly out of pocket. Not yet out of ideas, though, reports Mario Cabral e Sa. At Margao, hoteliers play friendly football matches in their leisure hours and capitalise on the results for their advertising campaigns. Winning hotels buy space in the local newspapers in order to publish the results: at the last reckoning, Longinhos Hotel had routed La Flor Hotel by five goals to one. Occupancy at the Hotel Republica (Pahaji) is a dismal zero per cent. This, in spite of the fact that the film *The Sea Wolves*—due for release on June 26—was partly shot here. The hotel's touts proclaim loudly at jetties and inter-state bus stops that Roger Moore lived there, but to no avail.

The Oberois' latest plan is to sell the rains to the Arabs during the June-September months on the gorgeously primitive Bogmalo beach. Local purists are worried, knowing as they must, that an Arab's wet dreams are not necessarily confined to listen-



ing to the falling rain. Yet another scheme to attract tourists involves the enacting of passion plays. At village Goa Velha, once the seat of the Kadamba empire, a "procession of saints" is held during Holy Week. Apart from Rome, nowhere else but in Goa—or so claims the local MLA, John Periera—is such a spectacle to be

witnessed. Statues of 26 saints are carried by the faithful who are dressed as colourfully as the saints themselves. Indeed, it is said that Santa Angela Mericia, a saint who "participates" in the procession, answers the prayers of women, young and old, who are in search of their respective Prince Charmings. Passion plays,



as Pierto de la Valle wrote, were great spectacles in Goa. Sixteenth century Portuguese nobility, the gentlemen as much as the ladies, would wail loudly at the *Ecce Homo*. So did their native servants and, according to the chronicler, if they did not, they were beaten up. Now this could be a tourist attraction indeed!

Celluloid city

The erstwhile principality of Avadh has suddenly become an obsession with the more creative film directors; it's Muzaffar Ali now with *Umrao Jan Ada*. The celluloid venture based on Mohammad Mirza Ruswa's novel and featuring Rekha as Umrao, is another attempt at recreating the splendour of

Avadh which even the Lucknavis have forgotten. All they remember is the bevy of stars which converged on Lucknow for *Shatranj*, then *Junoon* and, more recently, *Umrao*. Muzaffar's unit, as expected, chose the few historical locales in the city where signs of Avadh and its culture are still noticeable. While Rekha

performed a *mujra* at the *baradari*, the police beat up an uncontrollable crowd of overenthusiastic spectators. And when the unit left for distant locations, hundreds of people followed in hired vehicles. This was another occasion when Lucknow remembered its heritage, thanks to Rekha and the film unit.

Lizardry

It all depends on how it drops. Among the Gowd Saraswats of Goa, fortune hinges on the manner in which a lizard — and there are plenty of them in every house in Goa — falls on you. Should a

lizard fall on a man's head, he is assured of a long run of happiness. The right cheek, forehead, wrist or lower lip all signify the same thing: promise of wealth. And for the ladies, the

forehead, the right ear or the right hand would be fine.

For lifelong happiness, just ensure that a lizard drops on your beloved's breasts. Lucky lizards, adds Mario Cabral e Sa.

No bars for religion

Prisoners in Punjab will soon be praying — in better conditions, reports Satish Kumar. A plan for the construction of temples, mosques and gurdwaras at eleven Central, one state and two sub jails is under way. The structures at Patiala and Amritsar alone are expected to cost Rs. 4.5 lakhs, but it will be money well spent. And for a good cause too. Nabha Central Jail, where Jawaharlal Nehru was imprisoned and which now contains a large number of Muslim convicts, will have a *pucca* mosque in place of the shabby *mehrab*-type *ibadatgah*.

Hot business

This year's biggest soft drink success has been MAFCO's new drink, Energee, which is selling one lakh bottles per day, of which ninety per cent is accounted for within the city limits of Bombay. Energee is nothing more than Aarey milk in three new flavours, given a new name and advertised heavily. MAFCO (Maharashtra Agriculture Development and Fertiliser Promotion Corporation) had superb timing, and their brilliant promotion has helped milk sales register a 60 per cent increase since March. The Energee advertisement campaign cost Rs two lakhs but it certainly succeeded in making money while the sun shone. It is good to



see a government under taking being so enterprising. And speaking of entrepreneurship, there should be a prize for the young man (he would not dis-

close his name) who hires used motorcar tubes to swimmers at Juhu beach. At the nominal rate of 50 paise per tube, say his customers, he is doing a roaring trade.

Mountain of experience

The mountain bug struck again, this time on All Fools' Day. Six final year students of St Joseph's College, Darjeeling, left with a high altitude porter for the 18,000 foot Bidhan Chandra peak in the western Sikkim Himalayan range. The team was led by Abhijit Kumar, a 16-year-old Calcuttan. He had with him Thinley Namgyal, Tshering Dorji, Loga Dorji, Singey Dorji and Phurba Singh Tamang — all veterans within their own rights, having already completed an Adventure Course of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in February this year. The peak was conquered in four bizarre days

of trekking and trudging. For Abhijit and his team, this feat was merely a stepping stone. Their next target is the 23,997 foot Chomolabri, highest

among the mountains in Bhutan. But not before the team completes the Basic Course in March, 1981, adds Taposh Mukherjee.



Academic interest

A disclosure in the last budget session of the Goa Assembly has set tongues wagging in Panaji's pubs. It all started when an MLA demanded that Ministers give details of their personal staff. Minister for Education, Francisco Caetano Sardinha, a young man who used to be quite a hit in the village dance halls of his Sastaluk, came up with a rare one. On his list of personal staff he had a teenager, fifteen-year-old Anita Fernandes. The young girl does not have any academic qualifications, the Assembly was told.

Unholy inflation

The famed Tirupati laddu distributed as prasadam at the temple of Lord Balaji will now cost Rs three as against Rs two, the price a few months ago. Temple authorities, however, point out that the laddus which contain almonds, saffron, cardamom and cashew nuts prepared in pure ghee cost nothing less than Rs 3.08 a piece. The hiked price notwithstanding, claims Arthur Pais, the temple stands to lose as much as Rs 70 lakhs a year. Not all devotees accept this rationale. Tirupati temple's annual income exceeds Rs 18 crores and so they see no reason why the prasadam should not be subsidised.

April Fool, May be

Madras, it would seem, has been celebrating April Fools' Day for about five weeks. On the real day, April 1, announcements in all the local dailies claimed that N. A. Palkhivala was going to speak on the subject of "international tensions" at a well-known public hall in the city. A sizeable crowd turned up, at the venue only to discover that the announcement was a hoax. Some smart Alec had managed to get hold of the official letterhead of the Indian Institute of Public Administration

and sent out "invitations" to all the local newspapers. So it was not just the public that was taken for a ride; the Press was bluffed too. But that was not all. Ashok Kamath reports that on April 10 a prankster rang up the US Consulate in Madras and told a woman officer at the other end that two Iranian students had planted a bomb in the Consulate premises. He considered it his duty, he claimed, to 'tip off' the prospective victims and prevent any damage to life and property. The

Consulate officials contacted the police and the bomb threat was taken so seriously that the entire vicinity was cordoned off while heavy traffic around Gemini Circle was diverted. A bomb detection squad was pressed into service and the entire building was "vacuum cleared" only to find that the bomb scare was a hoax. A couple of days later, the Madras TV Centre received an anonymous call in the evening, saying that a bomb had been planted within its precincts. Although the

initial reaction was to cancel the scheduled film and to evacuate all personnel, the show, in The Grand Tradition, went on. With gritted teeth and crossed fingers, the film — a popular Tamil hit, *Kalyana Raman* — was telecast without any untoward incident. Since then there have been two more bomb alerts, both of which fortunately turned out to be damp squibs. The first one involved the State High Court buildings and the other, the state-owned Pallavan Transport Corporation office.

Maratha lobby humbled

Stalwarts fail to corner Cong (I) tickets



A. R. Antulay



Vasantdada Patil

WITH the single flourish of a list Mr Sanjay Gandhi has reduced the once powerful blue-blooded Maratha lobby to a toothless tiger. The list of Congress (I) candidates in Maharashtra is a sensational illustration of the non-dimensional political future of Maharashtra which has been reduced to a political puppet of 12 Willingdon Crescent.

Maharashtra was always ruled from Maharashtra, sometimes its seat of power was Sangli, sometimes the sugar belt in Ahmednagar district or Pune. But it was Maharashtra that pulled the strings which stirred Delhi. Now this position has been inscribed in the musty pages of Maratha history in continuation of the 300th anniversary of the coronation of Shivaji the hero. Many a Maratha political leader has tried unsuccessfully to mould his image on Shivaji but succeeded in becoming only a scheming Peshwa.

A list of Assembly candidates normally has the etchings of the figure that might be the next Chief Minister of the state. Traditionally, political leaders fielded their own candidates so that their lobby then elected

them to Chief Ministership. This time Mr Vasantdada Patil, hitherto one of the most powerful men in Maharashtra who had humbled Mr Y. B. Chavan and Mr Sharad Pawar in the Parliamentary elections, had around 1000 names that he had presented to the election committee. He could get barely 60 of his men in. All the others, like Mrs Premilabhai Chavan, Mr V. P. Sathe, Mr Jawaharlal Dardha, Mr A. R. Antulay, Mr S. B. Chavan and Miss Saroj Khaparde had their own lists and most of their people too were thrown out. In fact, Mr Antulay's righthand man, D. N. Chaulkar, a Youth Congress leader of sorts, who was on the list was unceremoniously booted out at the last minute and a lady, Dr Lalitha Rao, included instead.

All the leaders of Maharashtra, new and old, have been badly bruised in the bargain. The two stalwarts who suffered a drubbing were Mr Vasantdada Patil and Mr A. R. Antulay. The latter had made it known to all and sundry that he was Mrs Gandhi's next choice as Chief Minister. To pre-empt any mishap, he had even announced that he would be

contesting from Shivardhan in Ratnagiri, his old constituency which he lost to the Janata Party in 1977.

Mr Antulay's case is one of overconfidence. Whether he can still retrieve his position is a dicey issue, but he did overplay his cards. It is very reliably learnt that a few days before the dissolution of the Maharashtra Assembly he and his friends were making desperate attempts to get Mr Sharad Pawar to defect. Mr Sharad Pawar and his chief political adviser, Mr Rajni Patel, had hatched a plan whereby they would defect with 50 legislators on condition that they got an assurance that Mr Antulay would be the Chief Minister. They related this plan to Mr P. C. Sethi, the then Minister for Petroleum, who had come to Bombay to see what could be done about engineering defections. Mr Sethi was elated and promised that Mr Antulay would be made the Chief Minister in return for the 50 defectors headed by Mr Pawar. However when Mr Sethi went to Delhi and narrated his plan, Mr Sanjay Gandhi shot it down immediately. He saw in it the hands of Mr Rajni Patel and Mr Y. B. Chavan who felt they could manipulate Mr. Antulay. Mr Gandhi has made it known that he will have no one in the Congress power structure who has any connections with Messrs Patel and Chavan. Vasant Hoshing, Murli Deora and Ramrao Adik learnt this to their grief in the recent Parliamentary elections. And so the plan failed and Mr Pawar stayed put while many of his close lieutenants like Mr Dadasaheb Rupawate, Sushilkumar Shinde and others joined the Congress (I).

But Sanjay Gandhi did not forgive Mr. Antulay for hobnobbing with Mrs. Gandhi's enemies, the men that bit the hand that fed them. The face-saving explanation trotted out is that Mr Antulay is an MP and therefore was not given a ticket. This is a lame excuse as Mr Gulabrao Patil from Sangli is a Rajya Sabha member and has been given a ticket.

Mr Vasantdada Patil has been cut to size for different reasons. He represents the powerful sugar lobby that held the reins of power in Maharashtra and dictated political, economic and agricultural policy all these years. The Marathas were a well-knit community encompassing 36 per cent of the population but cornering nearly 85 per cent of the positions of power.

Mr Patil had nursed hopes of becoming the next Chief Minister and that's why he manoeuvred to have his followers included in the list. But 12 Willingdon Crescent decreed differently, since their political strategy is for full control of the state in the future. They saw this as an opportunity to neutralise Mr Vasantdada Patil. They not only crossed out most of his men from his list, but gave two people from Sangli tickets.

one to Mrs. Shalinitai Patil, Dada's wife, and the other to Mr. Gulabrao Patil, Chairman of the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB). This was a blow to Dada because it meant that his wife if elected would not even be a Cabinet Minister. Traditionally, if the chairman of MSCB is elected to the state Assembly he is always given a Cabinet position because of his stature. Ironically, Gulabrao was Dada's man. Dada had seen him as a thorn in his side in Sangli and had as a 'deal' made him chairman of the MSCB in return for his not meddling in state politics. Now Gulabrao has switched loyalties to Mrs. Premalabai Chavan, the President of the Maharashtra State Congress Committee. So Shalinitai has no chance of becoming a Cabinet Minister.

Mrs. Gandhi's trusted people like Vasant Sathe, Satoj Khaparde and Jawaharlal Daidha also incurred her displeasure because, instead of acting as a team, they functioned as factional heads. Among themselves they divided the state into regions which they thought they controlled, some deciding on candidates from Kolhapur some from Vidarbha and

so on. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, it is learnt, realised that instead of thinking of her interests, they thought only of their little power games and failed to act as a team. So when their lists went to Delhi their candidates' names were slashed unceremoniously.

Another political leader who got a drubbing was Mr. S. B. Chavan, the man who was Chief Minister during the Emergency, who later left the Congress and formed the Maharashtra Socialist Congress and aligned with the Janata to get the prized Cabinet post of Finance Minister. Mr. S. B. Chavan, who hates Mr. Vasantdada Patil, was so taken up with Mr. Antulay's claims of becoming the next Chief Minister, that he aligned with Mr. Antulay and issued a Press statement lauding Mr. Antulay in the most sycophantic manner. He said, "Mr. Antulay had stood by Mrs. Gandhi in the hour of her worst crisis and consequently Congressmen all over have regard for this quality of his". Mr. S. B. Chavan went so far as to say "that the rank and file of Congressmen in Maharashtra hold Mr. Antulay in esteem and affection, is a fact that arouses jealousy against him in cer-

tain quarters and false reports owed themselves to such jealousies." This sealed Mr. Chavan's fate and his men were out. The last minute sop he got, of having Mr. Vicki Kapur included in the Bombay list, has kicked up a furore in Chembur where Congress(I) workers have already announced their intention of not working for him and of indirectly helping Mr. Hashu Advani of the Bharathiya Janata Party.

Mrs. Gandhi has ruthlessly clipped the wings of the kingpins of the Maratha lobby, but retained the Marathas in the present power structure. Her confidants are Mr. Baburao Kale and Mrs. Premilabai Chavan, both Marathas. They are docile, softspoken, unambitious and capable of dumb, unquestioning loyalty.

But this 'Kissa Tickets Ka' will have a happy ending because neither Mr. Y. B. Chavan nor Mr. Sharad Pawar is capable of channelling this discontent in their direction and the Congress(I) even in its confusion is confident that it will get not less than 225 of the 288 seats in the coming Assembly Elections.

OLGA TELLIS, Bombay

1400 huts demolished

The poor are out under the sun



Houses being bulldozed in Saroornagar

DAWN, April 20, 1980. Seven truckloads of policemen, a gas squad and a strike force approached Saroornagar on the outskirts of Hyderabad city, with deliberate steps. They were accompanied by Mr. H. K. Babu, the district collector of Rangareddy, and the Superintendent of Police. Their objective: the demolition of 1,400 huts and semi-permanent structures that were encroaching on 30 acres of Government land. Thousands of victims squatted on the road in an attempt to prevent the demolition and confused women and

children ran helter skelter: but to no effect. The pleas of the hut-dwellers went unheeded and in a matter of hours the thousand odd huts were razed to the ground, rendering six thousand Harijans and other weaker sections homeless. But that was not the end of the reenactment of this mini version of the Turkman Gate tragedy. Five CPI leaders including a legislator K. L. Mahendra were arrested for protesting against the operation.

The question that arises is: Why the demolition and the arrests?

According to the CPI leaders, the demolition operation was a political vendetta against the hut dwellers who had voted for a CPI candidate during the recent Lok Sabha elections. Mr. C. H. Rameswara Rao, the CPI leader in the Vidhan Sabha alleged that Mr. K. Prabhakar Reddy, Deputy Speaker, made it "a point" to evict these poor hut-dwellers ever since the elections. Moreover, the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Channa Reddy was reported to have taken a personal interest in issuing the eviction order. This, despite all assurances made on the floor of the Assembly that hut-dwellers would not be dispossessed of their land. The leaders argued that, out of seven hundred such illegal occupations in and around the city, only Saroornagar was singled out for demolition. Even there, out of 500 acres of Government land, about 110 acres was illegally occupied by ten persons who were supporters of the ruling Party. But Government picked out only those 1,400 huts for demolition where each hut-dweller occupied only 75 sq. yds.

And the other side of the story? Mr. H. K. Babu the Rangareddy District Collector denies that the demolition was forced. He claimed that, far from protesting against the demolition, most of the hut-dwellers themselves helped by pulling down the huts. He denied any political motive for demolition and said it was only to safeguard 30 acres of Government land worth about Rs 50 lakhs that the operation was carried out. Mr. Babu further said that these encroachments were not of long standing but were "engineered by certain political Parties for their own ends."

It may be recalled that the tehsildar had issued a show-cause notice on February 10, 1980, but Gayatri Devi, President of Nava Bharat

Samajam representing the hut dwellers, filed a civil suit and obtained an ex-parte injunction against the Government. The encroachers refused to receive the final notice of eviction on March 27 and the court vacated a stay order on April 19 following which the Government acted. This was stated by Mr Babu in the meanwhile the hut dwellers went to court to protest against the demolition and Judge Raghuveer ordered a status quo posting of the case to May 7 1980. Despite the court order the Government went ahead with the bulldozing of the area on April 24, 1980.

The Andhra Pradesh Government is, however, deeply concerned with the problem of encroachment. In fact the issue has reportedly been discussed during the recent Cabinet meeting. According to a recent survey by the District Collector, nearly 1.5 lakh families have constructed huts on Government land in and around the city. There appears to be greater concentration in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and Rangareddy district than elsewhere in the state. The Government is worried that these encroach-

ments would grow into ugly slums without the basic amenities which would precipitate unhygienic conditions. It is consequently, contemplating on an ordinance to remove encroachments on its lands without the statutory stipulated minimum 30 days' notice. This proposed ordinance is to be examined presently by the law department.

It may be pointed out that the Government's concern over land stems from the fact that in recent times land prices have constantly been on the rise—a phenomenon which came into being three years ago following the enforcement of the Urban Land Ceiling Act and has been precipitated thereafter primarily by two other facts. One, the inflow of money from Arab countries with the increasing number of people from Hyderabad seeking employment abroad, and two, the Marwari and Gujarati business communities have formed a beehive in the Hyderabad industrial belt, thereby putting an upward pressure on the demand and hence the price of land.

KALYANI SHANKER
Hyderabad

MGR makes a film

To woo voters this month

"I AM now an actor by daytime and a politician by night. With these words actor politician, and Tamil Nadu's CM for three years MGR resumed his acting career in May. The film *Ishudhan en Badil* (This is my Answer) is a specially designed "quickie", and the atmosphere at Sathya studio, where it is being shot, is highly secretive. Journalists are not wanted, photographers are hounded out, idle spectators are chased away and though a new girl is being groomed, her identity is being kept a top secret. The songs for the film were however recorded in a different studio and so their political contents soon leaked out. There are references to the teachings of the late Annadurai, and veiled references to Mr Karunanidhi and his friends who are said to have betrayed those ideals.

The film will be shot in Hollywood fashion, one of MGR's spokesmen told SUNDAY. Three stunts will go on simultaneously. The scenes involving MGR and his heroine will be directed by him, other scenes will be shot in the same studio by three other directors."

Ishudhan en Badil is being shot at breakneck speed and MGR wants to have it released by May 20, elections to the Assembly will take place on May 28. "What if the film runs into censor snags, won't it be delayed?" we asked one of MGR's organisers. "We're expecting all kinds of problems, hence the reluctance to let people come to the sets", he said. "Even the definite release date will be kept a secret so that DMK



M. G. Ramachandran

goondas' won't create disturbances around the theatres and scare away prospective audiences. We wouldn't mind releasing the film on a day other than Friday and without publicity too."

MGR is now approaching 64 but he will appear as a young man in the new film. He has no qualms about such things. "If Gregory Peck and Anthony Quinn can romance around with young women why not MGR?"

asked P. Neelakantan, a veteran director and MGR's faithful camp follower, who will be directing a segment of the new film. "But Peck and Quinn act their age, they don't call themselves young men", we reminded him. "But our audiences always want to see MGR as a young man", argued Neelakantan.

For three years during his Chief Ministry, MGR made several efforts to go back to films, apart from three pending films launched in 1976, a new project '*unnai veedamallen*' was announced in 1978 but the film didn't progress beyond the recording of the title song. "Every time MGR tried to take some time off to act, he was confronted by some serious political problem", says an aide.

Why didn't MGR resume his acting career earlier, say in March? He would have then had his three pending films completed. MGR must have tried to do so but his continual misunderstandings and bickering with his poll partners must have consumed a great amount of his energy—and time. Hence the delay.

As MGR was getting ready to face the studio cameras, his men were looking around for a suitable heroine. His old faithful Latha was still very much around, but why not present a bright teenager who would look young enough to be his granddaughter? Names of newcomers Vijaya shanti, Sathyakala and Aruna were being mentioned as his prospective heroines, another name that cropped up was that of Sri Lakshmi, daughter of a retired actor Amalanath.

When MGR was the Chief Minister the DMK camp came out with half a dozen films which contained subtle digs at MGR but right now Karunanidhi is more interested in writing heavy election speeches than coming out with political movies. Of course these days Karunanidhi is writing for two films starring Congress (I) hero Sivaji Ganesan, these films won't be released before the election however.

Secrecy has been MGR's strength. Whether the man is a regular paranoid or a doubly cautious business man, the fact remains that he's highly allergic to people entering his sets. Even his extras are chosen for their political loyalty. MGR's make up room is guarded like a precious strategic fortress, he seems to be scared that he'll be seen without the wig and some smart alec might take photographs of his bald pate.

It was an obsessional practice on his part not to announce the name of his heroine till the film was half way through, and the tradition was maintained this time too. Since MGR belongs to a Party which claims to be rationalist, there were no pujas or mahurats to launch the film. However it is believed that journalist producer Manian, one of MGR's closest friends, not only fixed the auspicious time for the first shot but also got special blessings from Kanchi Sankaracharya.

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

Where is Lakhbir Kaur ?

Even her lover doesn't have a clue



Lakhbir Kaur

RIPUDAMAN Singh Dhillon (Rippy) is sure that his beloved, Lakhbir Kaur (24), is alive; he believes she would never commit suicide. Her parents and the police might have given up, but Rippy is still looking for her: in the lanes and by-lanes of Patiala, at the gurdwara, and, in his weaker moments, even in the local canal. He saw her last on January 20/21 at her residence, when he spent the night secretly in her room. The two were discussing eloping, as Lakhbir's parents were arranging to marry her to another man. But Lakhbir said no; eloping would bring shame to her family and might come in the way of arranging a match for her younger sister, Simrat.

The lovers' conversation continued until Lakhbir's parents knocked at the door in the early hours of the morning. Rippy managed to escape. He ran across the lawn, jumped over the boundary wall, fell into a pit and lay there, hurt. After a few minutes, Rippy left for Bassi Pathana in the outskirts of Patiala where a sympathetic uncle of Lakhbir lived. Rippy had hardly finished narrating his story when Simrat, Lakhbir's younger sister arrived to tell her uncle that Lakhbir had disappeared.

Ajit Singh Pannu, Lakhbir Kaur's father, a US citizen of Indian origin, did not approve of Rippy as a prospective son-in-law. He wanted his daughter to marry a bank officer; Rippy was working as a translator for a publishing house based in Chandigarh. Mr Pannu was probably not aware of his daughter's preferences till she flew to New Jersey to see her father in December, 1978. Lakhbir stayed in New Jersey for nine months but apparently she failed to convince her parents. When she returned to India with her parents and younger sister, she told Rippy that her parents did not want her to marry him. Rippy had known Lakh-



Rippy

bir since 1977 when she was studying in Chandigarh.

On the insistence of Rippy, Lakhbir's parents finally lodged a complaint with the police on January 24. But the Pannus told the police they suspected Rippy, Jagdish Lal and Narinder Chaudhury of having abducted Lakhbir with the intention of killing her if she did not agree to marry Rippy. The police registered a case under sections 364, 365, and 366 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Rippy was taken into custody. Jagdish was arrested. But Chaudhury could not be arrested as he had returned to Saudi Arabia where he worked. The police subjected Rippy to intense questioning. He was twice remanded into police custody but the magistrate refused the third remand on the grounds that the police had not been able to establish a prima facie case against Rippy who eventually was released on February 4.

Rippy does not suspect any foul play, though he has been surprised by the attitude of Lakhbir's parents. They pursued the case for only a fortnight, after which they persuaded Sukhbir Singh—who was supposed to wed Lakhbir—to marry the younger daughter, Simrat. The marriage, according to Rippy, took place in Patiala and soon the newlywed couple left for Delhi. The youngest daughter was, in the meanwhile, admitted to a residential convent school in Simla. On March 7, Ajit Singh Pannu, along with his newly married daughter, left for New Jersey; Sukhbir Singh, his son-in-law, is to follow shortly. Left behind in Patiala is Lakhbir's mother who seems to have forgotten her daughter. And of course there is Rippy who works in Chandigarh but is invariably in Patiala, looking for his beloved.

**A CORRESPONDENT,
Chandigarh**

Dacoits turn politicians

THERE was the usual crowd of politicians and their hangers-on in front of the Bhopal Circuit house in Madhya Pradesh. The politicians had come in large numbers for their "tickets" to contest the coming Assembly elections. Suddenly a large car arrived and the atmosphere became charged with tension. Out of the car stepped one of the former terrors of the Chambal ravines and an erstwhile dacoit—Mohar Singh. A little later another of his compatriots—Madho Singh was to arrive. Both the penitent dacoits had been released from jail only two days ago. They had served eight years of prison sentence following their surrender.

Mohar Singh, an awe-inspiring personality with a bristling moustache, more dramatic than what is seen in films, clad in a brown khadi kurta and a khadi dhoti told this correspondent that he would be actively supporting the Congress (I) in the forthcoming Assembly elections because he was a "kardar" (staunch) follower of Mrs Indira Gandhi. Four senior police officers (either shadowing him or just escorting him) were present in the room when I talked to the "terror" who once had a reward of Rs two lakhs on his head for hundreds of cases of dacoity and murders. Singh was only interested in supporting the Congress (I).

What caused a flutter in the crowd of onlookers who had come to see the "ticket-tamasha" was the fact that Mohar Singh had come in the VIP car with the Union Housing Minister, Mr Prakash Chandra Sethi. Mr Sethi had arrived to participate in the meeting of the Madhya Pradesh Congress (I) Election Committee. The other Chambal terror and former dacoit, Madho Singh, followed them in a open jeep. Madho Singh is young and has a magnetic personality. He looked dashing in his white khadi kurta and pyjama. It may be recalled that Mohar Singh and Madho were among the 12 dacoit leaders recently released from the open jail of Mungwaik.

What had made both of them go to the circuit house? And what had made Mr P. C. Sethi persuade them to come to the scene...? Did their presence have something to do with the fierce fistfight, that took place only two days ago among supporters of Mr Vidya Charan Shukla and Mr P. C. Sethi amidst shouts of zindabad and mardabad slogans? These were the questions that were constantly being asked.

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THEY tell a story in Orissa of a raja who had a large and flourishing harem. One of the raja's favourite servants was a barber who used to come each morning and massage the raja. One day the barber, seeing the raja in a very good mood, asked if he could marry one of the women in the raja's harem. Go ahead, said the raja, choose who you like and make her your wife. The barber picked up the prettiest of the young ladies, and, with great ceremony, took her to his village and married her. Five months later, a son was born to the couple, and the birth was hailed by the barber as a great achievement of his marriage, which he trumpeted far and wide.

Early this year, the Government of India formally sealed a deal with the French for collaboration on a massive aluminium project in Orissa, investment for which is expected to be a huge Rs 1,500 crores. This of course will be a great boon to Orissa, and J. B. Patnaik, the Congress (I) leader who has told journalists that he will be the new Chief Minister of Orissa if the Congress (I) wins the Assembly polls, has called it Mrs Gandhi's gift to the people of the state. The truth is, of course, that this deal has been a long time in the making, and was pushed through by Biju Patnaik. But as the story of the raja and the barber shows us: sometimes, somebody does the real work, and somebody else takes the credit.

BUT here, as elsewhere, opposition leaders are looking to the coming Assembly elections with something less than total confidence. They are, for a change, being realistic. The fight is really on to keep the Congress (I) majority to what might be called an acceptable minimum. An overwhelming majority for Mrs Gandhi would not only flatten out the drooping spirits of the opposition, but would also ensure a handsome majority for her in the Rajya Sabha, thus smoothening the way for any legislation she may contemplate. But will Mrs Gandhi repeat the smashing victory of January, in which her Party won all but one seat in the state (onr the dominating Biju Patnaik could defeat the Congress(I), and that too by a narrow margin)? Petrol and diesel are not very evident in Bhubaneswar. Sugar, when available, costs as much as Rs nine p r kg. Etcetera, etcetera. But can Mrs Nandini Satpathy and Mr Biju Patnaik convince the people that they are the saviours? Haven't these faces become too familiar?

BIJU PATNAIK's name can still arouse a cry of admiration, and from quarters where one would least expect it. I was answering questions from the dais

NOTES

M. J. AKBAR
from Bhubaneswar

during the annual students union festival at the Utkal University on May 2. It became a very lively and informal session, and after the initial hesitation, the students really let it rip: they were confident, well-informed, interested in a large number of issues. Suddenly one student came up to the microphone in the hall, and made a statement rather than asked a question: "Biju Patnaik is a tout." Before I could even begin to respond, there was a roar of disapproval from the hall, and the student who had said this was booed back to his seat.

The next day, our Bhubaneswar correspondent Swaroop Jena and I went to Biju Patnaik's house for a chat. As we were leaving, we saw an old woman sitting on the steps leading to the ground floor hall. She stopped us to ask when Biju Patnaik would come down. Jena said, soon, and asked her what her problem was. She had come from a village nearly 50 kilometres away to tell Biju Patnaik that her hut had been burned down, and that she had lost everything and wanted his help. "He is the only person who will help," she commented. "No government will do anything".

ONCE again, her eyes were sparkling with the promise of battle. Just appointed chief of Congress(U), Nandini Satpathy has launched into the coming Assembly elections with something of the old verve which had deserted her these past couple of years. Since the end of 1976 she has been having a bad time. First, Mrs Gandhi deprived her of the chief ministership of Orissa. Then there was the momentary glory of the CFD, which Mrs Satpathy joined with Jagjivan Ram, H. N. Bahuguna and D. N. Tewari. But Nandini Satpathy soon found that her compatriots in the Lok Dal were not in a forgive-and-forget mood; they still saw her as an Emergency Chief Minister, and the state government duly began cases against her too. During the last parliamentary elections, Mrs Satpathy remained with the Janata amidst rumours (which she kept denying) that she was going to defect to the Congress (I). However, she was not very prominent even there. This time around she is back on the Congress label,

though not with Mrs Gandhi.

If people do not dismiss the Congress (U) in Orissa as an insignificant bunch of defeated people with magnificent aspirations and non-existent votes, it is largely because of the presence of Mrs Satpathy. She is still said to command a handsome following. Our correspondent, Swaroop Jena, says he would not be surprised if the Congress (U) won about 35 seats. Mrs Satpathy's personal estimate is, naturally, higher. Whatever the eventual outcome, it is clear that she will put some fight into a lifeless Party.

THE three main Parties in Orissa have all projected their potential chief ministers: this again, makes Orissa's elections different from every state, with the exception of Tamil Nadu, where Karunanidhi and MGR are entering yet another round in their bitter personal struggle, once again with new allies. As mentioned, J. B. Patnaik of the Congress(I), now the Union Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, is scheduled to be the CM in case his Party wins. This has not gone without comment within the Congress (I), where the prospects of soaring have sent many ambitions soaring. It was originally planned that J. B. Patnaik would contest the Assembly polls in order to get into the house at this stage, but pressure from within his Party has forced him to leave this contest alone. On the other hand both Biju Patnaik and Nandini Satpathy are contesting, clearly both with the chief ministership in mind.

Orissa has always produced interesting results in Assembly elections. Since 1967 the only time that the state gave any Party a clear majority was in 1977, when the Janata swept the polls with a record number of seats. The most fascinating results came in 1971, when the elections to the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha were held simultaneously. The people swept Mrs Gandhi's parliamentary candidates into power—and at the same time, defeated her Assembly candidates.

AND for the footnote this week, we move from Orissa to Delhi. Saumitra Banerjee reports that according to the police estimate, around five lakh ticket-seekers had gone to Delhi during the last week of April to try their luck with the various Parties — of course, mainly with the Congress (I). There are only 2,237 constituencies being polled. One is reading a lot of stories of dissidents, and how they will affect the chances of official candidates. But such stories appear before every election. And never are these so-called "dangerous" dissidents ever able to do much at the polls. Will it be any different this time?

Manipur attacks outsiders

APRIL 27, a little before three in the afternoon. We are rickshawing down the Khwairamband bazar area of Imphal in search of lunch; suddenly a loud, sharp report pierces the air, and a police van slows down. In a few minutes the atmosphere of the place changes. A lady comes running into our restaurant and collapses into a chair. The street gets deserted, shutters are downed and everybody holds his breath. What had happened? A CRP jawan accidentally put his finger on the trigger of his rifle and killed a old woman selling silver jewellery in the bazar. The bullet also grazed and injured two other shoppers. The mood of the city suddenly becomes furious. Groups of youth start stoning shops belonging to outsiders (the mayangs). A car is set on fire in the Thangal bazar area. Police fire teargas shells and several rounds into the air. Curfew is clamped down from 6.30 p.m. Manipur is in an uproar again. And once again the familiar targets of the north east are suffering "foreigners".

When curfew is lifted the next morning as usual at 5 a.m. Imphal enters a period of organised violence which is unprecedented in the recent history of the city. In many areas of the city and its outskirts the mayangs are under attack. The most serious violence is witnessed in the Telipatty area. The attacking crowd of young people came at around 10 a.m. They pelted stones, burnt houses, and beat people. The local police were not very helpful. When a passing police party was frantically requested to help, they said they were on patrol duty and could not stop. A resident said that the local telephone exchange took more than an hour to put their call to the police through. The helpless residents of the area, mostly poor Biharis whose ancestors had lived here for over 100 years, defended themselves the best way they could. Ornaments and money were looted. Four trucks, a bus, a motorcycle and a good deal of personal belongings were burnt. The next evening (Tuesday) there was another attack but this time the fire brigade reached sooner.

The destruction did not remain confined to Telipatty on Monday. A tile factory, a saw mill and a tyre (retreading) factory were burnt. The tile factory was robbed of its cash. Its chowkidar was beaten up and he complained that his wife was raped. The Paona bazar area in the heart of Imphal became a veritable battleground and the Government virtually gave up trying to control from about 5 to 9 a.m. Kanu Chand Bose, one of the injured, was hit on the head with a dao. (When he regained consciousness he found himself in the hospital.) People took refuge in the dharmasala. Victims like Bose or Shibu and Gobinda Kangshabanik from the Chagalban Road area were

Students take the cue from Assam and go on the rampage.

By SUBIR ROY



The burning north east

MANIPUR

pathetically poor people, suffering because the rampaging mobs considered them "exploiting foreigners". In fact, most of the 2,000 odd people from Bihar, Bengal and Nepal camping at the dharmasala were from the lower middle class or working class. The stream of people fleeing their homes and occupying the dharmasala, gurdwara, kalibari and a Bengali school had numbered 7,000 by Wednesday.

Till then the state government had done nothing for them. The Chief Minister had asked the local chamber of commerce to provide the basic necessities, promising payment later. Some of the organisers were rather sceptical about the promise; they remembered a similar promise made in 1973 and unfulfilled till now. Although the Government had announced on Monday that relief would be provided, no Government help had come by Wednesday. With fear and tension all around, matters became worse with the near-total breakdown of the telephone services. The sense of isolation of those who felt unsafe is hard to comprehend.

Wednesday was relatively incident-free in Imphal but shocking news came from outside about what happened the previous day. In Sagolmong, about 30 km from Imphal, there had been widespread arson. About 200 huts belonging to Nepali cultivators had been burnt. But stories of human generosity lightened some of the gloom. One M.L.A. J. Tonipok (Congress U), for example, had sheltered all non-Manipuris in his constituency. Reports also said that many Manipuris were doing the same in their areas. A strong voice of protest was raised

by the former Chief Minister, Mr Yangmashu Shaiza. The Tangkhul leader said, "The present atrocities are most deplorable. I will call a meeting of tribal leaders. We will never be a party to this". In a telegram to the Prime Minister he said that the situation had gone completely out of hand and the administration had broken down. The local police were siding with the rioters, he alleged. In an interview he amplified further: "Officers like chief secretary Thanga, DIG-Range Damudor and SP-city Karunamoy are not doing their work properly. I have advised the governor to remove all these high-ranking officers and bring in others". When confronted with this charge Chief Minister R. K. Dorendra Singh said, "I have asked the chief secretary to go into the cases of officers against whom there are allegations". But what about the chief secretary himself? "He is doing his job well," said the CM. Detailing the steps he had taken to control the situation, like calling out the army and promulgating the Manipur Preventive Detention Ordinance, he said he had also started a dialogue with the students. On Wednesday, at the Chief Minister's initiative, a citizens' committee was formed and it issued an appeal for peace and harmony.

The present tensions in Manipur owe their origins to the movement in Assam against foreign nationals from which the students of Manipur Valley have taken their cue. The leadership of the movement is in the hands of the All Manipur Students' Coordination Committee. The targets of the movement are the Nepalis, Mizos and Bengali Muslims, in that order. The area identified as the main centre of immigrant settlement is the KKK belt comprising Karong (40 km from Imphal), Kngpokpi and Kanglatongpi, now predominantly Nepali. One immediate aim of the movement is to unseat the lone Nepali M.L.A. Kishore Thapa, who was first elected in 1972. Although the Nepalese are the prime target, no less are the Mizos who have settled in the Southern district and are known by the generic name of Kukis. (It is they in fact, who settled the Nepalis.) As opposed to the Kukis, the other important tribals of Manipur, the Tangkhuls, who are Nagas and have settled in the Northern district, are not considered a problem by the residents of Manipur Valley, the Meeteis, who constitute two-thirds of the population of the state but occupy one-third of the area. The tribals in the hill districts are not interested in the movement.

On February 15 this year the All Manipur Students' Coordination Committee submitted a charter of demands to the Chief Minister. This was followed by another memorandum on March 8. The students met the Chief Minister again on March 18 but could not get a positive response.

An important landmark after that is the March 26 meeting of student leaders from all over the north-east in Dibrugarh in upper Assam. The result of the coordination of ideas that must have gone on in Dibrugarh found expression in the intensified agitation in Arunachal and Manipur from April 17. The Meetei students wanted the postponement of the higher secondary and pre-university examinations until the foreign nationals issue was settled. On the 17th, when the examinations started in Manipur, one student died in police firing. This was followed by another death in police firing the next day in Nambol. The Government thereafter postponed the examinations by a fortnight. On April 27, with just seven more days to go for the examinations to restart, the situation in Imphal was hardly conducive to the peaceful conduct of the examinations, though the tough Finance Minister, Mr Rishang Aisang, told us he was determined to proceed with the examinations.

MANIPUR has been no stranger to violence. It does not take long to feel the mood of confrontation that dominates the state. Jawans behind gun emplacements dot the airport. Other than the state police and its armed wing, there are the Manipur Rifles, the CRP, the Assam Rifles and the army—all meant to guard against the violence which different groups could perpetrate.

A typical example of the endemic violence and tension was narrated to us by the state's publicity director on April 26. He came to office that day an hour late, shaken. There had been violence in Patsoi village, eight km from Imphal on the New Cachar road. Some CRP personnel had been attacked, and intensive combing operations had started there. He had also been rounded up, and held until a CRP officer identified him. Three CRP jawans had been killed when assailants had fired at them when they were delivering water to some CRP families. A fourth jawan, though injured, had turned on the assailants, fired and killed one of them. A passing CRP patrol then engaged the assailants; in the 40-minute gun battle that followed, one more of the assailants was killed—and two innocents, a pregnant woman and a 17-year-old boy were caught in the crossfire and died. The jeep in which the insurgents had come was recovered, and the documents found showed that they belonged to the extremist group, Prepak. Two rifles (snatched away from the CRP), two magazines, and 51 rounds of .303 ammunition were seized.

Although the present mass agitation is directed against "foreign nationals", from June 1978 Manipur has been gripped by periodic leftist violence. A United National Liberation Front was established in 1964 with the objective of establishing an independent country comprising Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Burma. The movement eventually split bet-

ween hardliners and softliners who wanted their revolution at a slower pace, and in 1968 the hardliners announced the formation of a Revolutionary Government of Manipur. A group of these extremists went to East Pakistan for arms and training; upon return, 40 were arrested in Tripura.

By 1975, the star on the revolutionary firmament was Biseshwar (now about 35 years old). In March 1976 he led a group of 14 to Tibet through Nepal. Between March 1978 and February 1979, this group, who called themselves the People's Liberation Army, attacked and killed security forces, captured arms and occasionally looted banks. Now the PLA is said to be regrouping on the Indo-Burmese border.

Around 1975-76, the People's Revolutionary Government of Kangleipak (Prepak) came into the picture. Its ambitions were more conservative; instead of independence for the whole of the north-east, it only wanted the freedom of Manipur from India. It came to the fore in late

January justice in Prepak, the then plain-looking firebrand Sushila Datta. In their absence, a splinter group of Prepak led by Maipak Sharma emerged. The Government started negotiations with the arrested revolutionaries. A cease fire was arranged from March 14 for a month and Tulachandra went on the air to appeal to his comrades to temporarily lay down their arms. In mid-March came the brutal retribution. The Maipak Sharma group, who were not interested in the negotiations and suspected the Tulachandra group of having betrayed the cause to the Government, killed Inaumacha, Prepak president, and Chitsen, Tulachandra's brother. In response, there were two unsuccessful attempts on the life of Maipak himself, in one of which in the heart of Imphal a bystander was killed.

One of the most serious instances of violence in Imphal this year took place on February 29. In the crowded Paona bazar area three Assam Rifles jawans were killed. The area was cordoned off and a rigorous combing operation followed. In this one of the assailants, Brojen, a PLA activist, was killed. There was an allegation that he was killed after he was arrested. In what was considered as a sop to the revolutionaries, the Chief Minister withdrew the Assam Rifles from active duty in Imphal, (this is something the Chief Minister now denies). But in a way Assam Rifles have been vindicated. After the disturbances that broke out from April 27 there have been countless requests from the affected minorities for the redeployment of the Assam Rifles, the oldest anti-insurgency force in the area. The Assam Rifles are now back on the streets of Imphal.

In Manipur, students constitute nearly a quarter of the population. The students' disenchantment with the system stems substantially from unemployment, and the rank corruption among politicians and officials. There are one lakh educated unemployed in the present population of 13 lakhs. Finance Minister Rishang Aisang detailed at least six major projects involving over Rs 80 crores of investment which have been awaiting clearance from the Centre for three to ten years.

One crucial reality of Manipur is its long border with Burma; there is no administration on the Burmese side. Arms of American make are freely available. There is also an assiduous campaign by China to promote the anti-Indian sentiment. O. Tomba, an Independent MLA said recently on the Assembly floor that the entire north-eastern region, including upper Burma would become a sovereign state and that China was supporting this move. Most politicians and senior Government officials have secretly compromised with the revolutionaries. The state Government's intelligence set-up is in a shambles. Nothing of consequence remains a secret to the revolutionaries for any length of time. The Manipur police and its armed constabulary, the Manipur Rifles, are quite ineffective. Manipur's future seems to be filled with curfew, violence and instability.



Arson at Telipatty

1978. In March 1979, its leader R. K. Tulachandra, took the long road to Tibet, but the Chinese did not offer encouragement, and asked him to work under the leadership of Biseshwar. On June 20, 1979, Tulachandra was arrested in Imphal, but 11 days later he staged a dramatic escape, taking the jawan from Manipur Rifles detailed to guard him along with him. The Prepak then attacked police stations and security forces with a vengeance.

The next milestone on the revolutionary calendar of Manipur came on February 16, 1980. A Prepak camp on Kouru hill was raided by the CRP. Two were killed; the rest escaped. Then 4 Assam Rifles were detailed for combing operations. In what must be one of the greatest counter-insurgency successes in Manipur, 4 Assam Rifles captured four people on a hillock in Mapau village on February 19 without firing a shot. Among the four were R. K. Tulachandra and the main arbiter of revolu-

Symphony of violence

SANTANU GHOSH reports

FEBRUARY and March 1980 were the cruellest months in Mizoram. Shattering a four-month-long uneasy lull, the ubiquitous MNF guerrillas conducted a series of swift hit-and-run forays into the hilltop habitations in the Union Territory during these months, killing 16 people and forcing the authorities to clamp down curfew again. For the most part of March, the serpentine 356 km Vairengte-Lunglei State Highway, the lifeline of Mizoram, lay coiled under the blanket of curfew. The army commandos, with their automatics slung on their shoulders have already embarked on what has been described as the biggest ever combing manoeuvre in Mizoram.

Among the guerrilla assaults, two were worth noting. An Assam Rifles 3-tonner Saktiman truck carrying 23 damaged LMGs and a few regular soldiers on leave was lumbering down the quiet Kolosib section of Aizawl-Vairengte Highway on February 27. It was 11.30 a.m. by the driver's watch. Suddenly a loud explosion shook the truck and the driver brought it to a halt. He clambered down, raced to the truck's rear and witnessed the grisly scene of bullet-riddled bodies screaming and writhing in agony in pools of blood in the truck. He knew from his experience that the vehicle was ambushed. So he sped to nearby Kolosib, a subdivisional town. Seven persons including two civilians died in that outrage and police later picked up a few scraps of paper at the site on which the legend "Quit Mizoram" was reportedly scribbled. MNF periodically serves quit notices to non-Mizos. On March 20, a small gang of MNF activists stormed into a Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) encampment located at a distance of 19 km from Serchip, a grouping village, on Serchip-Thenzawl road, opened up their LMGs on unwary road labourers who were taking their meals and killed four among them. Guerrillas then set ablaze several thatched huts of the labourers and fled away. On the same night, two unidentified gunmen shot dead a 37-year-old school teacher, R. P. Dutta, a permanent resident of Silchar, at Chhiahtlaung.

The spate of killings, paradoxically, took place against the backdrop of hectic backstage activities to resume the deadlocked peace parleys between the Union Government and Laldenga. The 50-year-old MNF father-figure, after his release from detention in November 1979, sent feelers to the Prime Minister in January. Mrs Gandhi who was cre-



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MIZORAM

dated with inspiring the RAW-SIB coordinated plan which successfully smuggled out Laldenga to New Delhi from his exiled existence at Karachi via Bonn, Cologne, Rome and Geneva in January 1976, replied on February 2, 1980, thanking the rebel leader for his "reiteration of the commitment to work within the framework of our Constitution". The task to rebuild the bridge of understanding between Mrs Gandhi and Laldenga was initiated by a team of the Mizoram unit of the Congress (I) during its one-month stay in the capital in February. On February 14, the president of the unit, Lalthanhawla and its general secretary, K. L. Rochama, were closeted with Mrs Gandhi for thirty minutes at her Delhi residence. Mr Rochama quoted Mrs Gandhi as saying that she was committed to withdrawing all cases of treason against Laldenga and resuming peace negotiations.

Though the wave of March violence has mercifully bypassed Aizawl, Mizoram's burgeoning capital, fear haunts its residents. Come sundown and roads are empty. The last of the regulars in the drinking joints in the back alleys of the capital stagger out by 7 pm. The gossip that is heard in drawing rooms deals with

the disturbing questions: Why does Laldenga remote-control a renewed wave of violence when he is all set to talk with Mrs Gandhi? Is there any power struggle in MNF sanctuaries tucked away in jungle terrains in Arakan and Chittagong Hills Tracts? Is there any "third party" conducting this symphony of violence in the name of MNF?

Mizoram's Chief Minister Brigadier T. Sailo blames Laldenga, saying that "the MNF is trying to achieve its demand of a statehood for Mizoram through violence". A People's Conference MLA says in a conspiratorial whisper: "Laldenga is trying to synchronise his talks with Mrs Gandhi with a dose of terrorism and violence, so that the rebel leader can have effective clout on the bargaining counter". An angry Rochama snaps back: "This talk of Laldenga's involvement in the present violence is all bunkum as he knows that he will lose all the gains he has achieved in his recent PR campaigns in Delhi". In a signed note released for SUNDAY, Mr Lalthanhawla states: "Various strategies are being worked out to provoke the MNF. For instance, some MNF personnel are allowed to surrender without arms, while others who genuinely want to come overground and live a life of loyal citizens are rejected. In the process many persons are compelled to go back to jungle... Hostilities are regarded by the public as pre-planned and concocted to create a situation to harass the opponents of Brigadier Sailo". By "opponents" Lalthanhawla, a one-time MNF activist, obviously means Laldenga and his confidants, both those underground and overground.

The new showpieces at Aizawl at present are the large buildings which house the offices of the SIB. The white-painted buildings, situated in official lines and overlooking the Raj Niwas, are known as ears and eyes of the Central Government for Mizoram. Sources close to this set-up now darkly hint about the snowballing power struggle in MNF hierarchies in Arakan. It is revealed that Laldenga's trusted aides—Zoramthanga and "Colonel" Tawnluia—could no longer control the hawks among the new generation of insurgents. Says a recent returnee from the underground setup: "Laldenga has been away from the scene for over a decade. He is steadily losing his charisma among the members of the new generation who have only heard about him". Present hostilities are intended to deliver home a grim message that present peace moves have got no sanctions of the rebel headquarters. Word is around that Ropianga, MNF general secretary and "Major" Lalrawna, Union Territory Commander of the rebels, are the kingpins manipulating an anti-Laldenga tirade. Accusations and counter-accusations only help to add to the Mizoram jigsaw. Says a non-Mizo official who has spent about 15 years in Mizoram: "In Mizoram it is difficult to guess who is doing what and why" ■



Laldenga, third from right, at New Delhi residence with family.

THE WORLD

Chan vs Chan

Film actor Peter Ustinov speaks Chinese and will slant his eyes in his new role as Charlie Chan, the Chinese detective in *Charlie Chan and the curse of the Dragon Queen*. He will utter such immortal lines as: "Ancient ancestor say, worry like rocking chair. It give you something to do, but get you no place". While script writers are churning out the new version of the "Chinese Holmes" coincidentally produced by one Mr Sherlock, serious Chinese and Orientalists in America and elsewhere are rocking the Charlie Chan chair. The Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Chinese Historical Society and the Chinese Cultural Centre in San Francisco have declared all-out war and have proclaimed that they would obstruct the filming which began in May in Chinatown, San Francisco.

Mr Sherlock's or Jerry's to be precise, most militant critic is once again coincidentally a Miss Eliza Chan. Her protests forced Mr Sherlock to hold a discussion regard-



Peter Ustinov

ing the script. During the head cracking session Mr Sherlock told everyone that he was not a racist. He could not afford to be one since his son was a Japanese-Jewish American. But Miss Chan would not budge. She said that Charlie Chan was speaking bad English and was not following Chinese traditions. The script had directed Charlie Chan to bow, a tradition typical of the Japanese. What else could producer Sherlock do but assure everyone that the great Chinese detective's English would be improved.

Hard times for le President

The French President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing is in trouble. One of his close friends and political associate, Mr Poniatowski, is stated to be impeached for interfering in the course of justice while he was Minister of the Interior. The charges against the former Minister involves the President indirectly and seems to be directly connected with the murder of Prince de Broglie. Allegations are that de Broglie, co-founder and fund raiser of President Giscard's party, who fell from grace when his business dealings became embarrassing, was allowed to die. Poniatowski and the French police knew about when de Broglie was to be killed before he actually was. The demand for impeachment will be



President Giscard

put to test by an ad-hoc Parliamentary committee. And Le Figaro, that staunchly establishmentarian newspaper said in an editorial that the scandal had brought about an "end of reign atmosphere". All this is naturally concerned with whether President Giscard will be re-elected next April but then it will be no cakewalk for him.

Sheikh off your hypocrisy

Hardly had the scandalous row over the screening of the controversial BBC TV film — "Death of a Princess" blown over when the BBC jumped into the fray once again. This time they telecast a film on the sensitive issues of Saudi life. In the documentary the Saudi Arabian royal family was described as a "family firm ... in an age of supermarkets". It was said that there was hypocrisy in the Saudi life. Rich people in the country drank and gambled when they were on foreign tours but "piously support-

ed" severe punishments for those who indulged in the same things at home. The documentary contained extracts from interviews with members of the Saudi royal family. Said the editor of Panorama, Roger Bolton, "We didn't make any allegations in the programme that were not put to them in questions". The documentary had been filmed in Saudi Arabia in March and April and was to be shown before the Death of a Princess. Whatever, it is the British spirit is not lacking when it comes to putting up a stiff fight.

Bloody wonderful!



Lee as Dracula

came ashore from a wrecked schooner, in the shape of a black dog. The plate reads: "The view from this seat inspired Bram Stoker (1847-1912) to use Whitby as part of the setting of ... Dracula". From the seat, the lodgings from which Lucy Westenra, the Count's first English female victim, went sleepwalking in her nightdress are visible, as

The first person to use the seat after the bronze plate had been unveiled was Mrs Ann Dobbs, 63, of Farnham, Surrey, granddaughter of Bram Stoker, who is yet to read Dracula. When asked for a reason, she said: "My father, when I was young, told me that I would find it frightening. I don't feel that I want to read it now". A bottle of Rumanian plum brandy "bought in the Borgo Pass in Transylvania, where Count Dracula met Jonathan Harker and offered him plum brandy" was brought by Mr Bruce Wightman, the chairperson of the Society.

Dracula lives; no longer the blood sucking vampire, but a hero to his fans now, who have gotten together to form the Dracula Society. No is at work, trying to track down all the settings which Bram Stoker has used in his world famous novel Dracula. On April 20, 1980, the town of Whitby, North Yorkshire, was presented with a bronze plate for a seat overlooking the harbour where the Vampire Count

Jeans for work

Levi jeans are going Scotland. In an expansion programme, Levi Strauss the world's largest cloth manufacturers will create 1000 new jobs starting next year in the country.

The land has been bought and production begins next autumn. Hopefully unemployment figures will now look less blue, thanks to the jeans, blue and others.

Is the IMF a bully?

Yes, points out A. N. PRABHU

THE International Monetary Fund in a cryptic announcement on April 17, 1980 said: "The executive board of the International Monetary Fund has decided that the Government of the People's Republic of China represents China in the fund. China's quota is SDR 550 million." The IMF said nothing more about China in the characteristic announcement. This gives the impression that the bank does not, and is not expected to say anything more. A banker-customer relationship has to be such that one client should know the least about another client. This is all the more so in the case of a prestigious customer like China. Thus, however, does not mean that the IMF knows only as little as it gives out to the world. The IMF accumulates more information—every bit it can collect—than it can possibly use for its legitimate function of a banker to the world. What it does with this information is anybody's guess. Not only does the IMF gather every shred of information from its members but it updates the information and possibly cross-checks it with other member-countries' data. Why does the IMF bite off more than it can chew? How does it help for it to gather the minutest information on member-countries?

The IMF's way of getting information is to send a detailed questionnaire to member-countries. A high level team then descends on the host country for a face-to-face talk with senior officials of the various economic Ministries. The face cannot bluff even though some points in documents may. This logic is extended to the maximum. The IMF team cross-examines the officials of member-countries to elicit further details on statistics and other information contained in the reply. The 40-page questionnaire is exhaustive and leaves nothing to chance.

The questionnaire obviously places undue emphasis on certain sectors of the economy. It starts off by asking general questions on output in a chapter entitled "Factual information". The country is to provide latest estimates of a) national income and b) ratios of domestic savings and total investment to national income for the past five years. The IMF also secures a sector and category-wise break-up of the domestic savings and investment figures. For example, it wants estimates of the kharif and rabi agricultural production crop-wise for the period since

1976-77. It expects comments on the crop damage resulting from drought and estimates of the reductions in the areas under cultivation and yields of major crops and estimates of overall output short-fall attributable to the drought. Estimates of procurement and distribution of kharif and rabi foodgrains during the last five years and the latest estimates for the next year are called for. It also expects quarterly estimates of stocks of foodgrains in the central pool and with the state Governments.

Some of the questions can be extremely trying to the officers. Here is an example: "Please list the changes made during 1978 and 1979 in the domestic procurement system for foodgrains including procurement prices, and the public distribution system. Please provide details of the food for work programme and the progress of the programme since its inception in 1977. In particular, please indicate amounts and types of foodgrains distributed, nature of public works undertaken..." While the output of a country is a necessary ingredient for judging the creditworthiness of a member-country, it is baffling why the IMF should go to such details as: "Please describe the present pricing and procurement policies for cash crops—jute and mesta, cotton, sugar cane and major oilseeds—and pulses. Please indicate the changes in these since..."

The officials may have to brush up their undergraduate economics in replying to some of the questions but would have to be much more accurate in the process. Another example: "Please give data on unit costs of the foodgrain procurement, storage, and issue operations, showing how these have changed owing to: a) the increased size of the buffer stock, b) wastage because of inadequate storage facilities and c) changes in pricing and distribution policy." Here is a nut rather difficult to crack: "Please provide commodity disposition tables for five years (and estimates and/or actuals thus far) showing production, domestic utilisation, exports, imports, and beginning and ending stocks for the following: jute, tea, cotton, major oilseeds and sugar."

The IMF asks: "Please provide a note on the current situation in the major industries in terms of output, stocks of finished goods, changes in capacity and the rate of capacity utilisation. Please provide data on the output of public sector enterprises...for (five years)..." The list of questions is long and tiring. Here is another sample: "Please describe the principal production control regulations (regulations on output or input mix, such as those on the output mix between electrical grade and other aluminium in the aluminium industry; or the oil input mix in the vanaspathi industry) governing major industries and the changes in these regulations during...years...and their rationale" (emphasis mine).

Another question is on crude production: "Please provide data on import, output, consumption, and end-year stocks (both for fiscal and calendar year) for crude oil and the different petroleum products (including kerosene, fuel oil, furnace oil, gasoline, diesel oil and naphtha) for...(five year period)...Please provide projections for 1980 and 1981." Then, "please summarise the major developments in oil exploration, both offshore and onshore, since 1977. Please provide data on production from Bombay High oilfields as well as onshore oilfields in 1977, 1978 and 1979 (estimates) and projections for 1980 and 1981...provide a summary of the measures that are currently in effect to conserve petroleum and to encourage the substitution of other energy sources such as coal."

The area of oil is considered sensitive. Not much information in detail (technical) is generally given to the nation itself. The general response to any question on crude production is typical in the following sentence: "Mineral resources are non-renewable. The principal mineral resource of the region is petroleum which by itself forms a special subject, and a specialised agency of the Government is solely responsible for the assessment and exploration, planning etc. much of the information is classified and may not be discussed" (North



Eastern Council resources paper, series 100, 1 (mining mine). But surely such a plea could not be made before a global organisation like the IMF. It has to be provided with all and up-to-date information. And there should be no hesitation because this would result in suspicion among the demi-gods in the IMF.

The questions on prices, wages, profits, etc are equally elaborate. It wants to know: "Please revise and update the data on monthly wholesale price indices by commodity group provided in the answer to question... In addition, please correct and update attached table... outline the progress made during 1978-79 and the current year toward more realistic prices being levied in most states for irrigation and electricity. Please summarise Government pricing policy for fertilisers over the same period... Please provide data on employment in the public and private sectors and on unemployment (such as the live registers of employment exchanges)."

Strangely, the IMF is keenly interested in knowing the "available data on the number of emigrant Indians working in West Asian countries". It also asks: "Please comment on the general situation with regard to labour relations... How many mandays were lost in (three years) due to strikes and lockouts? What have been the principal issues in dispute which have led to strikes or lockouts, and has there been any progress toward their resolutions?" A question on labour runs as follows: "Please summarise the principal developments relating to wages, salaries, bonuses, and dearness allowances in the private and public sectors... enumerate any adjustments to the dearness allowance formula..."

Besides asking for three copies of the official texts of the revised Sixth Plan document, the IMF wants to be enlightened on major revisions in the revised plan and again their rationale. It has comprehensive questions on the budgetary data for the Centre and the states and union territories, Reserve Bank credit, profitability of public sector enterprises, budgetary burden on Centre and the states for procuring and distributing foodgrains and budget subsidies. It wants to know the rules and general principles governing state Government deficit financing and overdrafts on the RBI.

It is not known why the IMF is so worried about the compulsory deposit scheme. It asks: "Please furnish the following information with respect to the Additional Emoluments (Compulsory Deposit) Act and the Compulsory Deposit Scheme (Income Tax Payers) Act by revising and updating the answer to question given earlier: a) disaggregated data on cumulated deposits under the separate facilities of these acts in 1978-79 and 1979-80; b) a schedule of repayment of principal and interests for 1978-79 and 1979-80 and 1980-81; c) a quantitative assessment of the additional amount of compulsory deposits that would have been collected in the past two years, and an estimate for 1980-81 if the CDS on one half of additional DA had not been abolished; d) a quantitative assessment of the effect in 1978-79, 1979-80 and 1980-81 of the changes, introduced in the budget for 1978-79 in the required deposit for taxpayers in various income categories and e) a note on any other major changes in the scheme since 1978-79 such as changes in the interest rate paid on deposits, changes in the method of repayment etc.

The country is not generally aware of the mechanics of securing an IMF loan and the consequences of becoming a member of the august body. As a senior official put it: "We are made nude and exposed fully to the gaze of the world." Another official bemoaned that he has to part with information which would normally have gone on a Minister's supplementary "pad"—a euphemism for "top secret". The minister is expected to part with the information only in case of an uproar in either house of Parliament. Yet for enjoying the status of being a member of the global financial forum, the country has to sacrifice its self-respect and put itself at the disposal of foreign nationals. It is in this context that one is surprised that China, which had insulated itself against outside influence for more than a generation and a half, should have succumbed to the temptation. But one has to keep up with the Joneses! It is for our parliamentarians to find out whether the IMF procedure in extracting information is in keeping with our national interest.

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KHAAS BAAT



Rekha: Bent upon conquering the south

It is bad enough when a big, established producer is faced with adverse publicity regarding his film-in-the-making. But a young new producer who is learning the ropes about production can be visibly shaken when adverse and caustic comments are printed about his first ever venture, even before its completion is anywhere in sight! Shibu Mazumdar, Raakhee's brother, who is producing the film *Taaqat* with Raj Grover, was rightly disturbed about a recent gossip-column item disparaging his effort as well as branding his famous sister in the most vile terms. The Mazumdar family is a close-knit unit, with brother and sisters pitching in together to share a normal, unilmi life together. And news like this rocks the household

especially when it is not true.

LIKE his famous brothers, Akbar Khan who is competing his first film *Haadsa* (for the past three years!) is given to a lot of swagger and pomposity, even if physically he is not as tall or tough-looking as his elder brothers. But he certainly can make a lot of tough-sounding statements about himself, his work and the "stars" in his film. With a sweetheart like Ranjeeta, going around with dogged adoration in her eyes, especially during this schedule, and elder brothers Feroze and Sanjay spreading a lot of lip-publicity for his "fantastic" direction-production of *Haadsa*... their kid brother Chico, as they call him, is walking no less than seven feet tall.



Sanjeev Kumar: Breakfast-lunch-dinner look

NOW look what everyone is saying about *Shatru* and *Reena*. Not much different from what they have been saying for the past two or three years, but here it is anyway. It seems at this point Shatru has serious reservations about his impending marriage to his fiancée Poonam—theirs is a 13-year affair—and, say the rumours, may actually opt for screen-steady Reena Roy. Now isn't this the nth time the man is cashing in on the will-be-won't-be speculation by readers and fans alike?

ONE hero who is very keen to start up something with a new heroine of his, is Rajesh Khanna. The lady in question is Poonam Dhillon, his heroine of *Red Rose*. He bagged her when she showed a lot of promise in Yash Chopra's film *Noorie* and a bit-role in *Kaala Pathhar* and the far-seeing Rajesh opted for her in his new films. Now that the advance reports of *Red Rose* are terrific, will Rajesh and Poonam blossom into a hit-film pair? On the home front Rajesh has nothing to fear. Dimple rather likes Poonam and understands that connections like these are purely professional.

A QUIET headway is reportedly being made by none other than dear ol' Rekha, who is currently riding high on the film-

scene with her newest co-star Kamal Hasan of the South. News goes that all's not too well on the Vani Kamal Hasan front. And Vani is not a typical sob-and-endure type of Hindu stree. For all her sugar-candy looks she is supposed to be quite a firebrand. Let's hope Rekha doesn't bring out the worst in her, or this girl might well meet her match!

SEEN but not believed. Sanjeev Kumar actually reporting for a two o'clock shift by two-thirty and ready by three and then turning down an offer of hot lunch from one of the eager helpers in the unit! He chose to give his shot instead. Then the mystery was solved, the offer was of a plain-looking Gupathi thali, resembling the one prepared at his own home day in day out. Now if it were a table-load of spicy Punjabi meat preparations, or better still some Chinese fare, then friend Sanjeev would certainly have kept his director waiting!

BIG budget films are slowly bowing out, and this was revealed by a trade bigwig himself. It is films like *Khubsoorat* which hold sway over giants like the not-too-successful *Burning Train*. Wonder what will happen to the giant-sized prices that stars like Bachchan and t.o. demand and get, when small films will be the order of the day.



Reena: Will she steal a march over Poonam?

KHAAS BAAT

EIGHT years ago, a number of people were murdered in the vicinity of Madras airport. The victims were rich Indian businessmen returning from the then Malaya or Japan. A.V.M. Sundaram's new Tamil film entitled *Approver* is inspired by this string of murders. The cast includes Geetha Choudhury and R. C. Sakthi, a renowned director. Uma Sri who was recently hunting for sexy roles is featured in a sizzling cabaret and a number of exciting bedroom scenes. In any case, Uma Sri has been heard asking people around her: "When will they abolish censorship?"

ONCE upon a time Bharatiraja's name in bold letters outside a movie hall ensured a film's success; the crowds would rush in without wanting to know anything more. His fourth film which was released last year turned out a roaring success. His jubilant fans now say, "Don't you remember that his other three films were also hits. So now watch out for the fourth." But Kallukkum *Peram* in which Bharatiraja has acted as a film director,

has been received rather mildly. It had a poor opening but later the film picked up some tempo. This has convinced the moviegoers and the film industry in general, that like others, Bharatiraja too isn't invincible. He did not even distribute his film wisely. Naturally, he is a sad man today. If *Red Rose* clicks we will surely see him smiling once again.

WHEN *Shalimar* was being shot, a Telugu producer described his next venture as Andhra's *Shalimar*. He couldn't have his film released before *Shalimar*. But once the late of Krishna Shah's film was known, the ambitious soul kept his mouth shut. Anyway, at least his film proved to be a mini hit. Similar claims were heard when *Burning Train* was being shot. A Telugu film starring Zarina Wahab was claimed as South India's *Burning Train* with *Silver Streak* atmosphere....

BEFORE he parted company with his brother Sandow Chinappa Devar, director M. A.

Thirumugham used to spawn two hits a year. A sizable number of them featured MGR as the hero. Most of these films were shot in dingy Madras studios with Devar's retinue of animals in attendance. After hibernating for some time,

Thirumugham was commissioned to direct a glossy venture called *Dharmaraja*. Forgetting the old studios, Thirumugham decided to shoot *Dharmaraja* in Japan and the neighbouring countries. Not only has the film turned out to be more ridiculous than the average trash, it has also presented Sivaji in one of the worst roles of his career. The karate scenes are positively painful.

KOKILA, the beautiful Kannada film, starring Kamalahasan and Shoba was screened in Madras only recently. In one of the picnic scenes a familiar face was spotted. Some believed it belonged to Seema. Others wouldn't agree. Seema was a junior artiste when *Kokila* was made, and she used to act in half-minute scenes in many films. In her bedroom there are trophies from several hit films. She proudly points out the trophy of a Tamil film *Anaaman Kadali* which continued for 100 days. "I appeared in one of the dance scenes in the film. By the time it was released, I was already a heroine in my own right, thanks to *Her Nights*. The producer Muktha Srinivasan graciously presented me a trophy" said the beaming Seema.



Halim with Rajnikant. The watch word is titillation



Uma Sri: Bugged by censorship laws

Chitra Moorthy

PIOUSJI

Beginning May 18

This week the Sun and Mercury are conjoined in Taurus. Venus is in Gemini and Rahu, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars are assembled in Leo. Uranus is in Libra, Neptune in Scorpio. Kethu alone is still in Aquarius. The Moon will be moving through Cancer, Leo and Virgo from Gemini.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) An exceptionally busy week that will bring you a great deal of success provided you put in much time and effort. A business partnership will bear fruit. Keep away from gambling and speculative enterprises. A great deal will depend on how calculating you are. You should keep an eye on your children's health. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 21 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 9 and 10. **Favourable direction:** South.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) The first three days of the week will be fruitful and some success will come your way. The remaining days will be somewhat difficult and trying. Guard against quarrels and accidents. Curb impetuosity—watch business and correspondence, avoid overstrain. Elders and children will eld you. Avoid speculation and sports. A letter will bring you unexpected news. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 20 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 7. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) This week will prove mainly happy and successful. You will make steady progress in all your undertakings. This will bring you praise from all. A female relative may occasion anxiety. Elders retard progress and cause concern. Check all extravagant tendencies. Avoid rich food and keep to your normal routine. Keep your temper under control. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 20, 21 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 8 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Although your recent difficulties will gradually cease to worry you, you will continue to experience minor obstacles on the business front and among relatives. Some unreasonable opposition on the part of an older person of the opposite sex is to be expected. Let not your present good fortune be lost through extravagance or overoptimism. An important travel is presaged. **Good dates:** 19, 21, 23 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) A mixed grill is your portion. Financial gains should surely outweigh the losses but in love affairs the greatest caution must be exercised. Take care lest through some sudden impulse or outspoken comment you imperil your employer's good opinion of you and prejudice your prospects of promotion. A happy romance or domestic event will bring you lasting joy. **Good dates:** 19, 21, 22 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 9 and 2. **Favourable direction:** South.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 20) Business, love and domestic matters occasion anxiety and should be tackled resolutely. Events beyond your control tend to cause big changes, but courage to adapt yourself to it will not be lacking. All that glitters is not gold. You will have to postpone a journey unexpectedly. Weekend will be fruitful in dealings with auspicious correspondences. **Good dates:** 19, 20, 22 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 2 and 4. **Favourable direction:** North-west.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) An unexpected event will ultimately prove beneficial, but watch finances closely. Drive and initiative will reward you well. Beneficial changes in profession, travel and improved health are portended. Prefer requests and push business to the utmost. The health of an elder may cause you some anxiety. Exercise caution with your partner. **Good dates:** 20, 21, 22 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 4. **Favourable direction:** North-east.



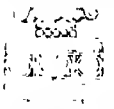
SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) A busy, active, successful week is ahead of you. Valuable help from elders and secret sources, as well as through your own endeavours will be forthcoming. Choose friends of the opposite sex with care and discretion. Children will prosper. Courtship and marriage are best deferred. Your planned travel is well signified. Wait for important letters. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 22 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 9 and 11. **Favourable direction:** West.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) Your friends may betray you. You will be blamed by your relatives and friends. Avoid gambling, betting and speculation. You will have adequate financial resources to surmount the urgent requirements. A short journey is presaged. Take care of your health. Check all extravagant tendencies. **Good dates:** 20, 22 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 10, 3 and 6. **Favourable direction:** North-east.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) Mixed stellar influences indicate some success. You will be held in high esteem by others. A good week for love and matrimonial affairs. Your family will contribute to your happiness. Members of your family may go on an important journey which will incur a lot of expense. Sports and speculative sources are well signified. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 20 and 23. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 7. **Favourable directions:** East and South.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Some good fortune and a lot of happiness are your portion this week. Some will buy new vehicles, ornaments and clothes for their families. Correspondence will bring in good news about auspicious agreements being settled. There will be some sort of change in profession. Those facing foreign exchange problems are likely to find a solution soon. **Good dates:** 18, 19, 23 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** East.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) A busy, active and successful week bringing in much happiness. A romantic courtship or a "happy event" is scheduled for you. Many opportunities for financial expansion and happiness will come your way. Guard against nervous exhaustion through excessive zeal and over-work. Guard against attempted misrepresentation in business. **Good dates:** 19, 20, 23 and 24. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 11. **Favourable directions:** East and South.

M. B. RAMAN

**Aren't you glad that the nicest things
in life never lose their freshness?**



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WARDHA A bridegroom who reached the marriage pandal here on Tuesday (April 22) had to return unmarried because the bride, Shakuntala, refused to marry him as he was under the influence of liquor. The bridegroom and the "Baraat" had come all the way from Ajmer. Minutes before the ceremony started Shakuntala declared, "I cannot make an addict my life partner" and left the pandal. Soon thereafter, a youth from Gondia in Bhandara district, Santosh Kumar Joshi, offered to marry Shakuntala and the marriage was solemnised the same day.—*Times of India* (G. N. Khadse, Bhillai)

MORADABAD A bride was stripped and deserted, near her village on Sunday (April 20) as her father could not give a bicycle and a buffalo as dowry. The bridegroom's relations had a tiff with the bride's father when he expressed his helplessness in meeting their additional demand for a bicycle and buffalo. They took the bride along with them but allegedly deserted her near Kandi village after relieving her of her clothes and ornaments. The bride's father has lodged a report with the police.—*The Hindustan Times* (Q. M. Asghar, Janshedpur)

GHAZIABAD : It was an examination in law. And the examinee a custodian of law. But the senior sub-inspector of police appearing for the first year L.L.B. examination at MMH college here was not by any means a respecter of rules. He was found copying. The invigilator, however, did not take kindly to this. But the police-men on duty apparently did not like their boss being disturbed by the invigilator. They threatened him. The matter, however, did not end there. Other students appearing for the examination raised slogans and even turned violent. That brought the senior police officials to the examination hall and the situation was ultimately brought under control.—*Times of India* (Narendra Chauhan, Raipur)

JAIPUR : An Ayurvedic dispensary in Jeejjala village is being run by a class four employee. He is the lone functionary of the dispensary. He indents for medicines and brings them from the district headquarters, examines the patients, enters their names in the register and gives them the medicines. Though it is four years since the dispensary was opened it has neither a doctor nor a compounder. The villagers said they were being told now and then that a doctor would be posted but none had come so far.—*The Hindu* (S. C. Sekar, Madras)

KURNOOL : A 32-year-old middle class farmer of Yedduladoddi village in Kurnool District has broken his 20-year-old gambling habit by maiming himself. It is stated that the farmer, B. Gopala Reddy, addicted to playing cards, had been heavily losing for sometime now. On Friday last (April 18) he staked his last hundred and lost. He went to his father's grave in the village, swore never to touch cards again and, to make sure, severed his right fist from the wrist with a knife.—*Deccan Herald* (P. S. J. Guptha, Bangalore)

IN 100 days, Mrs Gandhi must have made 100 new appointments and ordered 100 transfers. In 14 weeks in power, Mrs Gandhi must have withdrawn 14 cases against herself and her family—Piloo Mody quoted in Contour

BEFORE we talk of providing a viable alternative, we have to establish our credibility among the people...Mrs Gandhi has the quality to lead...We have no direction at all—N. G. Goray at the Janata Party convention in Bombay

I AM happy I am out of it—H. N. Bahuguna at a Press conference after quitting the post of Congress (I) secretary-general

...WE are Communists, we don't believe in violence. But if we are hurt we will not sit like Jesus Christ—Jyotirmoy Bosu, CPM MP

DELHI should realise that we are not gomastas (underlings) of Union Ministers — West Bengal Finance Minister Ashok Mitra, in reaction to Union Agriculture Minister, Rao Birendra Singh's statement that no Minister of West Bengal had met him during his stay in Calcutta

HE (Channa Reddy) has no faith in the implementation of the 20 point programme of Mrs Gandhi and has already expressed his hatred for our leader, Mr Sanjay Gandhi—Two prominent Andhra Pradesh Congress (I) legislators in a memorandum to the Prime Minister and Home Minister

THE Assam movement is picnic style where ladies belonging to upper income groups are participating with sandwich, jelly and jam in their bags—Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal

TRIPURA is neither Assam nor Manipur — Nripen Chakravarty, Chief Minister of Tripura in the context of the turmoil in the North-east

I DON'T believe in superpowers... I recognise USA as an imperialist power and I consider USSR to be a defender of liberation movements in Asia, Africa and America —Babrak Karmal

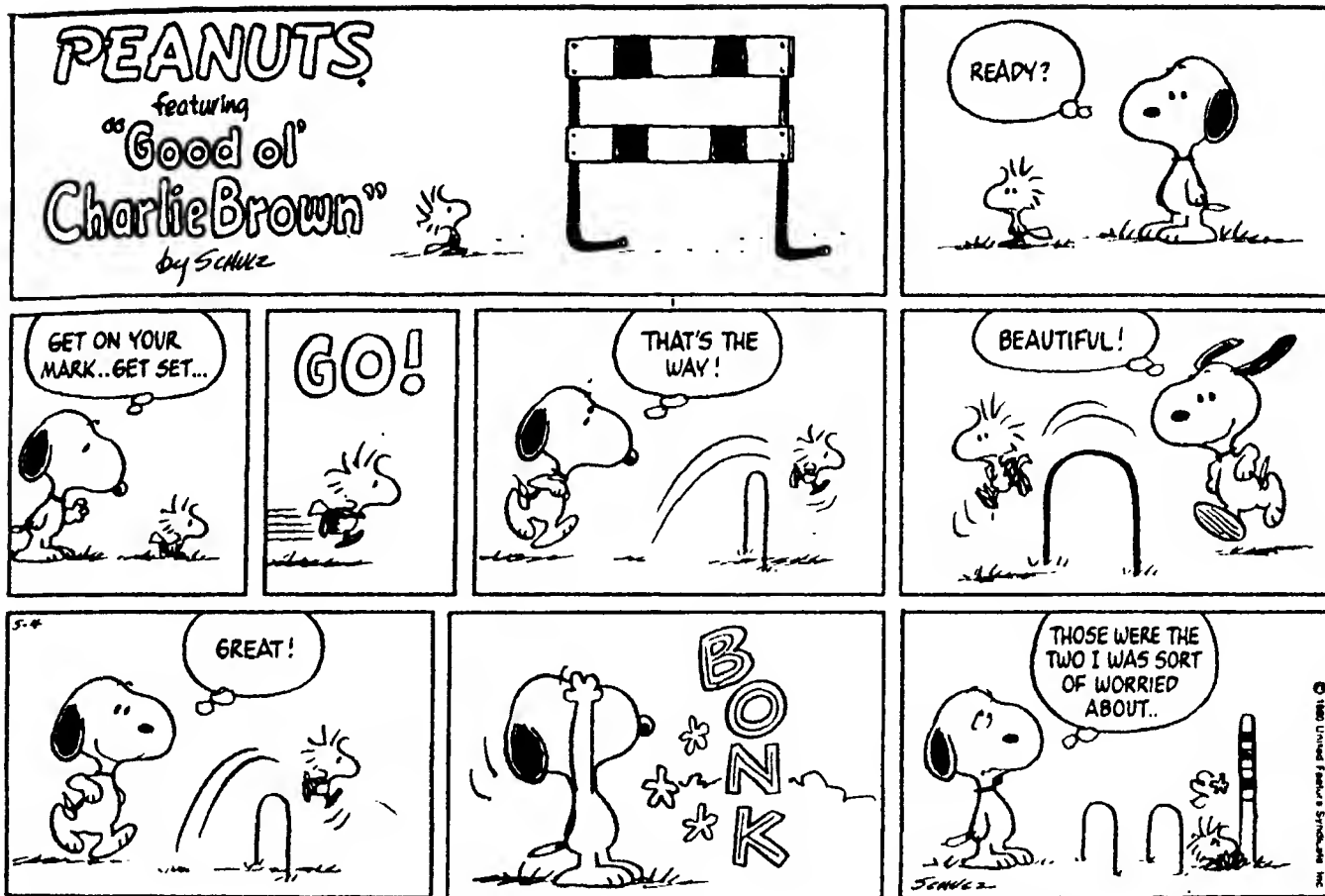
MY friendship with Sanjay and Rajiv (Gandhi) is not based on politics but because we like each other. Sanjay came to my wedding and I went to his—Amitabh Bachchan

IF you know the alphabets, you can read comic strips, but to go beyond that, you need some grey matter—Mrinal Sen

india abroad

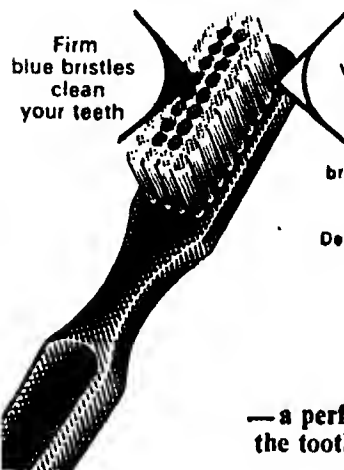
LONDON An officer of the Indian Administrative Service, on a short official assignment here, has challenged his prosecution on charges of shoplifting and opted to go on trial. The officer has also been charged with trying to assault a security guard and a sales girl who had accused him of stealing. It is one of the rare cases in which foreign visitors to London, charged with the shoplifting offence, have preferred to face trial instead of taking the customary advice of solicitors to plead guilty and be fined thereby avoiding legal proceedings to establish their innocence. The spate of shoplifting cases in the Oxford Street reported during the tourist season every year raises the

unanswerable question if some at least of those accused may not have ended up wrongly in the dock. Very often the store detective's word becomes the last and the customer is told by his solicitor that even if he proves his innocence, he will have to pay his costs. It is gathered, the Indian official who is doing a course under the auspices of the British Council, went to an Oxford Street shop last week, wearing a jacket he had bought in the same shop two days earlier. He tried a few blazers, did not buy any item and left the shop. A shop girl apparently suspected that he was walking out with the jacket without paying for it and called him back —*Times of India*



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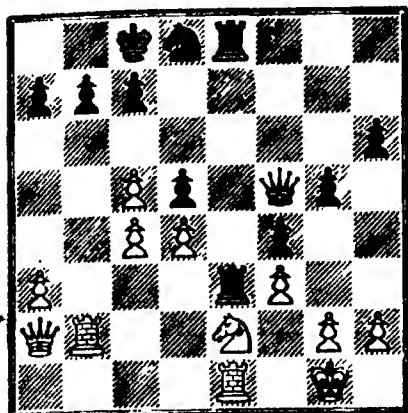
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chess

Short (Black) to move



Miles (White)
Position after White's 26th move

Game of the month

HAVING written last week about the British Championship, I should like this week to underline the outstanding performance of Nigel Short. To share first place in a national championship at the age of 14 is something quite out of the ordinary. I stressed last week that the Swiss system under which the championship was played does have a tendency to throw up freak results, but Nigel's success was no fluke. One has only to study his games to confirm this. I give as evidence his game against Tony Miles, who was of course strongly favoured to win the tournament. The maturity and class of Nigel's play is quite staggering from one so young - no doubt it gave Tony Miles quite a shock as well.

White A J Miles. Black N Short
British Championship, Chester 1979
French Defence

1. P-Q4, P-K3; 2. P-K4 A surprising choice. One would expect Tony Miles to choose a queenside opening where his greater experience would tell.

2... P-Q4; 3. N-QB3, B-N5; 4. P x P Not quite as harmless as it might seem, but there are sharper continuations.

4... P x P; 5. B-Q3, N-QB3; 6. P-QR3, B x N+ 7. P x B, B-B3; Improving on Korchnoi's play against Miles in South Africa earlier in the year, where White obtained some advantage after 7

KN-K2, 8. Q-R5!

8. B-KN5, Q-K2+ 9. N-K2, B-Q2; A good plan, preparing to castle long. On 9 O-O the pin on his knight would later prove very troublesome.

10. O-O, P-KR3; 11. B-KB4, O-O-O; 12. P-B4, B-K3; 13. P-B5, P-KN4; 14. B-Q2, N-K5! Seizing the initiative. White is not given a chance to exploit his bishop pair.

15. R-N1, P-B4; 16. P-KB3, N x B; 17. Q x N, P-B5; Establishing an outpost on K6 which will eventually decide the game.

18. B-N5, B-Q2; 19. KR-K1, Q-B3; 20. Q-B3, QR-K1; With this rook so that the knight has a retreat to Q1.

21. Q-N3, R-K6! With the nice tactical point 22. Q x QP? B-K3

22. B-Q3, N-Q1; 23. P-B4, B-B4; 24. B x B+ Q x B; 25. Q-R2, KR-K1; 26. R-N2, 26 P x P fails to 26... R x N, 27 R x R, R x R; 28 Q x R, Q x R+ (DIAGRAM)

26... P-N5! The triumph of Black's strategy. If 27 P x QPP x P 28 P x R-N1+ 29 K-R1 Q-R6 or 27 P x NP Q x P 28 P x P P-B6

27. R-KB1, P x P; 28. P x P, R-N1+; 29. K-R1, Q-R6; 30. R-KB2, R x BP1 31. N-N1, R-K6; The tactics blend in very naturally with Black's play. 32 N x Q allows mate after 32... R-K8+

32. R-N2, Q-K3; 33. R x R, Q x R; 34. P x P, P-B6; Miles has made the most of his meagre resources, but the advance of this pawn is too much for anyone to cope with.

35. P-Q6, Sheer desperation. The threat was 35... R-K8 and 35 R-N1 failed to 35... R-K7! 35... Q-N4; Playing for mate, though 35... Q x Q 36 R x Q N-K3 also wins easily (27 R-Q2 N x QP! 38 R x N P-B7 39 R-Q1 R-K8)

36. P-Q7+, K x P; 37. Q-N1, N-K3, 38. Q-R7+, K-B3, 39. Q-KB7, N x QP; 40. Q-QB4, Q x P; 41. Q-R4+, P-N4, 42. Q-O1, Q-O4, 43. R-KB2, R-K7, 44. Q-N1(A, K-N2, 45 N x R, P x N+, 46 R-N2, N-B7, and White resigned

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

In Problem 4 of the Christmas Competition the bidding at love all was

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
No	3♣	double	No

South holds

♠ 8 7 5 2
♥ J 10 3
♦ A 10 8
♣ A 5 4

Competitors were asked how many points out of 5 they would award to (a) Pass, (b) 3♣ (c) 3NT, (d) 4♣, (e) 4♠

This problem distributed an American panel into the five directions mentioned above. Since no bid is ideal, the best approach is to eliminate the inferior choices. To bid simply Three Spades when you hold two Aces is feeble, you will surely get the blame if game is missed. To plunge into Four Spades on 8 7 5 2 is unattractive. The main objection to Four Clubs is that partner with 4-4 in the majors will bid Four Hearts, which may go badly. I don't think there is much wrong in a pass, which may bring in 300, or in 3NT. The fact that you hold three clubs means that in notrumps you will probably be able to keep East out of the lead, and partner can always take out 3NT into a long major. Marking Pass-4, 3♣-2, 3NT-5, 4♣-2, 4♠-2

Problem 5 presented a little known defensive position. After 1NT by South, 3NT by North, West leads the Jack of spades and sees

♠ Q	
♥ K J 5	
♦ Q 10 8 6 4 2	
♣ 9 6 2	
♠ J 10 9 6 4 2	N
♥ Q 9 3	W E
♦ A K	S
♣ Q 6	

The Queen of spades holds the first trick. On a low diamond from dummy East plays the 3 and South the Jack. How should West plan the defence?

East's 3 of diamonds is probably the lowest of three; at any rate, West must assume that South holds a doubleton and that the contract can be defeated only by shutting out the long diamonds.

To attack the heart entry by leading the 3 will not avail if South holds 10 x x; he will play low from dummy and will establish an entry even if East holds up the Ace. But the Queen of hearts may be a killer. East, of course, will hold up the Ace, for two rounds

If necessary, and South will be unable to bring in the diamond suit. Marking, ♥ Q-5, ♥ 9 or ♥ 3-3, others-0.

TERENCE REESE

stamps

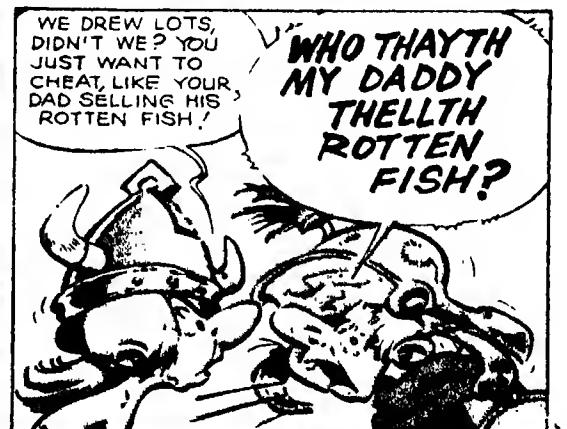


Instead of collecting the issues of a particular country or group of countries, many philatelists prefer to make a collection of the stamps which illustrate a single theme or topic, regardless of the countries from which they come. Popular choices include the story of aviation, space exploration, winter sports, music or art on stamps, and all categories of wildlife. A new series from San Marino will please collectors of trees on stamps. Each of the 10 stamps features a different tree, among them a cedar of Lebanon, a eucalyptus, a horse chestnut and, on the 170-lire stamp (above), a baobab tree. The new stamps are the work of a Swiss artist, Anne-Marie Trechslin, who has designed several other botanical series for San Marino.



The definitive stamps on sale in the Channel Island of Guernsey depict different coins which have circulated in the bailiwick since 1830, when the distinctive coinage of copper doubles was introduced to replace the mixture of French and British coins then in use. Sixteen of the stamps, ranging from 1p to 20p, were issued last year and the three high values, 50p, £1 and £2, are due for issue this week. The 50p stamp features the square cupro-nickel 10s coin minted in 1966 to mark the 900th anniversary of the battle of Hastings. As a result of Duke William's victory, the kingdom of England was added to his Norman and Channel Island possessions. A portrait of William the Conqueror forms the reverse design of the coin.

C. W. HILL





YOUTH CONGRESS UPSET...

DID THE Youth Congress get as many tickets for the state Assembly elections as it expected? The answer, surprisingly, is "no". The Youth Congress, in fact, has been snubbed, and many of its leaders have been refused tickets. The most surprising was the case of Arun Kumar Singh (also known as Munna). A general secretary of the Indian Youth Congress (I), Singh was not only an important functionary in the organisation, but also a sitting MLA from Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh—and he was elected when the Janata Party was riding high. The Rajasthan Youth Congress chief Ramchandra was disappointed too when the Rajasthan list appeared.

This does not mean that young people did not get tickets, or that Sanjay Gandhi ignored his followers. Not at all. But he seems to have begun trusting his personal loyalists outside the Youth Congress fold more than those within this organisation. Sanjay Singh son of the raja of Amethi, and Akbar Ahmed (alias 'Dumpy', an anglicised nickname given in Doon School, where he studied with Sanjay Gandhi), have been nominated because of their friendship with Sanjay Gandhi. All this is making the Youth Congress leaders wonder if their organisation has outlived its utility for Sanjay Gandhi.

...BUT TYTLER IS DELIGHTED

BUT WHILE others were licking their recently inflicted wounds, one Youth Congress leader was jubilant. His name: Jagdish Tytler. A creature of Sanjay Gandhi's, he rose into prominence during the Emergency, and then won an unexpected victory from Delhi in the Lok Sabha polls. He now occupies a prominent position at 1, Safdarjung Road (the PM's residence). He was entrusted with the important task of resolving disputes between various factions in the states during the hectic days of ticket distribution. According to a leader from Bihar, Tytler's methods were unique. He asked the rival factions to present their separate lists of candidates to him, so that he could prepare a consensus list. Then he went and simply ignored all the recommendations made by all the factions, and read out, before the Prime Minister (where

none of the factional leaders could dare open their mouths) a completely independent list, of his own.

GET THE MESSAGE?

THE man to watch in New Delhi's foreign affairs circuit is Sardar Swaran Singh, the rebel-turned-special envoy of Mrs Gandhi. On the night of May 6, Delhi Door-darshan had telecast obituary re-



ferences to Yugoslavia's late President Marshal Tito. Among the speakers were President Sanjiva Reddy, the PM Mrs Gandhi, and Sardar Swaran Singh. The external affairs Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, was conspicuously absent. Mr Rao's message had, however, been broadcast over AIR. While it was wise to invite Mr Singh for his experience of external affairs, having held that portfolio under Nehru, Shastri and Mrs Gandhi, one cannot help reading some significance into this Door-darshan gesture.

MY PRINCE vs YOUR QUEEN

THE Madhya Bharat region of Madhya Pradesh is going to witness a unique electoral battle in the coming Assembly polls: the nominees of a mother will be contesting the nominees of a son in the districts of Morena, Blind, Gwalior, Shajapur, Guna, Shivpuri and Datia. If this sounds like a good old feudal battle, well, it is. The mother is none other than the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia, who tried, with disastrous results, to defeat Mrs Gandhi in Rae Bareilly. Her candidates will be contesting on the lotus symbol of the Bhartiya Janata Party (which is the latest version of the old Jana Sangh). And fighting her candidates will be the nominees of her son, Madhavirao Scindia, who in the January polls, contested and won from MP on the Congress (I) ticket, after having joined the Party on the eve of the polls. For the Assembly elections, all his followers have been given nominations

from this region, much to the dismay of the Congress (I) people who have been with Mrs Gandhi for a much longer while than the prince. The Congress (I) High Command has even overlooked the "jail-going" criteria which it imposed on almost everybody else. One senior Congress (I) leader from Madhya Bharat has decided to stay at home in the May heat rather than campaign for the candidates of the Rajmahal.

EVERYONE WELCOME

NARGIS DUTT, recently nominated to the Rajya Sabha by Mrs Gandhi, has managed to get one of her nominees on the list of Congress (I) candidates from UP. Pushpa Chauhan will be fighting from Sikandrabad in Aligarh on the Congress (I) ticket; she is related to a film producer, K. P. Singh. Another interesting Congress (I) candidate is Bhola Nath Pandey, who was one of the two young men who hijacked an Indian Airlines aircraft. Incidentally in the massive UP list there are two candidates who have been, in the past, detained under COFEPOSA; these candidates will contest from Ramnagar and Shahjahanpur districts. And, most fascinating is the fact that a well-known RSS man is the Congress (I) candidate from Badaun district.

BULLY FROM SCHOOL

THE firebrand Congress(I) MP from the Vidharba region, J. B. Dhote, is up in arms against some powerful sections of the ruling Party. He is reported to have written a letter to the Prime Minister listing specific charges of high-handedness in Party affairs against another MP, a one-time schoolmate of Sanjay Gandhi. Dhote is said to have pointed out in the letter that with its present system of functioning, the Congress (I) could only defeat its own purpose.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

WHAT exactly is the Janata Party headed by Chandrashekhar trying to prove? It has formed an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party in Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and made local seat adjustments with that Party in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra. Why did Messrs Chandrashekhar and Vajpayee split at all?

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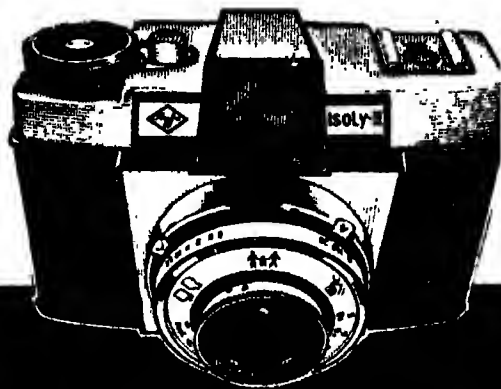
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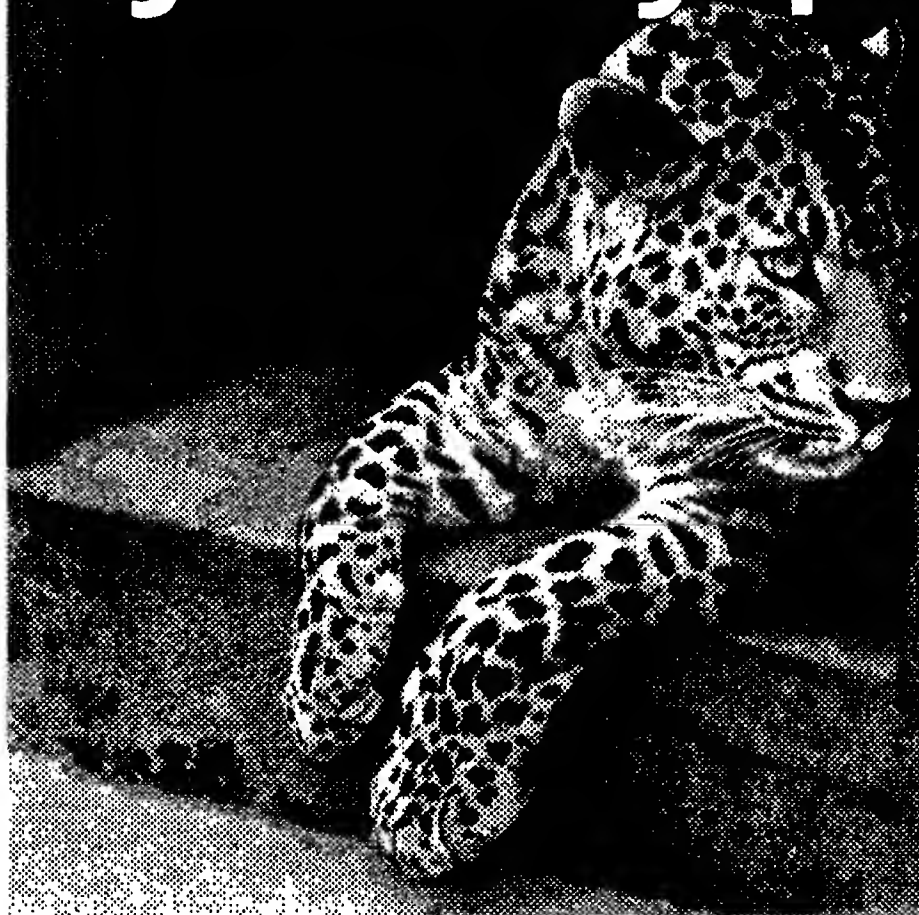
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Rakesh Kaushik, a life-term convict filed a petition to the Supreme Court and exposed the murky goings-on behind the bars in Delhi's Tihar Jail. SUNDAY exposes the corruption, drug, sex and blackmail rackets which are mainly controlled by the international criminal Charles Sobhraj.

Contrary to popular belief, the referendum went in favour of the partyless panchayat system. It was a disaster for the leaders of the multi-Party camp but B. P. Koirala warns that they reserve the right to propagate the revision of the Constitution. An on-the-spot report.

Parts of India languish in the feudal era. Helpless Biharis are being lured by prosperous Punjabi farmers with promises of well-paid jobs, deported to sprawling farms, given only a little food and water and forced to toil all day — as slaves. SUNDAY investigates



Has the Union Minister for Works and Housing, Mr P. C. Sethi gone mad? While he behaved similarly during Emergency, this time he seems to be outdoing his own previous record of eccentricity. Detailed report on his hilarious escapades, which many find unfunny.

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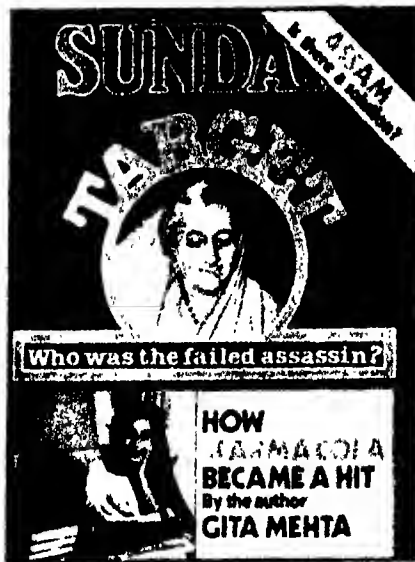
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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abhi,
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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Bravo!

IT IS a matter of great pride that an Indian, Gita Mehta, has won worldwide acclaim for her book *Karma Cola* ("How 'Karma Cola' became a hit", April 20). I have read the review of the book, and am sure it is an example of worthy journalism. Vinod Sujan, New Delhi.

AT LAST an Indian has paid westerners back in their own coin. After Abraham T. Kovoor's rationalistic appraisal of godmen in his two low-priced Jaico books, *Karma Cola* may

perhaps become another sensible exposition of the myth about India's "spiritual tradition made easy" for the westerner by men like Rajneesh, Mahesh Yogi, et al. Of course the Sai Baba caters more to Indian masses than to foreigners. Ms Mehta must also be praised for picking at the American jet-set media without being overwhelmed by its glitter, unlike most Indians who hanker for compliments from the western media to adorn the jackets of their books. Koneti, Cuttack.

YOUR preface to Gita Mehta's own article says "...reviews dripping with praise in the most powerful English newspapers and magazines..." Incidentally, the *Times Literary Supplement* dated April 18, 1980 has not given a very favourable review. To quote some of the sentences from the article by Dervia Murphy: "...the total lack of compassion in Gita Mehta's book is off-putting...Gita Mehta writes wittily but too harshly of these drifting dazed millions...From chapter 8 onwards one is aware of an author working to amass enough words for a slim volume...Her subject so quickly becomes boring because the people involved are boring—flaccid stereotypes enacting a tragedy without grandeur." Murphy goes on to point out some minor flaws too: "She refers to Kerala clerks...conversing in Kannada. But Kannada is the language of Karnataka and Kerala clerks would be conversing in Malayalam." Soma Sarkar, New Delhi.

Judging appointments

THOUGH your columnist Kewal Varma's article "Loyalty above all else" (April 20) was timely, much more remains to be said about appointments in the judiciary. Mr V. R. Krishna Iyer was a communist-supporting independent in the old state of Madras. Even in cases involving murder, Mr Krishna Iyer and the late Mohan Kumaramangalam were lawyers for the communists. The former became the Law Minister in the first United Front Government in Kerala headed by E. M. S. Namboodiripad. He then became a judge in the Kerala High Court. Subsequently, when Mr Kumaramangalam became a Congress Minister in New Delhi at which time he was instrumental in the supersession of three Supreme Court judges, Mr Krishna Iyer was suddenly elevated to the Supreme Court.

One of the saddest aspects of Indian national life is the total absence of discussion about judicial appointments. It can be safely said that not each and every judge is appointed on merits, but as a result of string-pulling. And once he is

appointed, he is automatically immune from criticism. S. N. Amir, Mangalore.

IF THE practice of rewarding the loyal were confined to politics alone, one would breathe a sigh of relief, though merit ought to get precedence over loyalty even in the distribution of political power. But if bureaucratic and judicial appointments are subject to the test of loyalty, the very foundations of democracy are threatened. Kewal Varma made a correct assessment of the present state of affairs when he said: "The bureaucracy was made a political football by the Janata. Mrs Gandhi is only returning the compliment." And perhaps with a vengeance. This will cost India administrative efficiency. The time is not far when bureaucrats will become the overlords and Ministers and politicians shall have to play second fiddle. The latter will have to repent. As far as the judiciary is concerned, its independence has been the bulwark against subversion of the Constitution. Let it remain independent or else, god save the Constitution, and god save democracy. Gobind Malhi, Bombay.

Why the silence?

A PROPOS of "Target: Who was the failed assassin?" (April 20) by Ajoy Bose, it is usual to set up inquiry commissions into such incidents. But in this case, Mrs Gandhi herself seems keen to play down the attempt to assassinate her, even though Lalwani confessed having thrown the knife. Also, interrogation had revealed that he had come from Baroda, knowing that Mrs Gandhi would garland the statue of Dr Ambedkar at Parliament House. The fact that officials are trying to play down the plot suggests they are hiding something—the missing link in Ajoy Bose's report.

Pradeep Pant, Hridakandi.

First things first

THIS refers to the letter by H. K. Dutta entitled "First number one" (April 20) which says that Prakash Padukone was the first Indian to win the world championship in any individual sports event. Both Wilson Jones and Michael Ferreira were world champions in billiards. Nishant Singal, Calcutta.

Capital crime

THIS refers to the report "Delhi student murdered" (April 6) by Ajoy Bose. It is a mystery how such brutalities can continue day after day in the capital. The whole episode resembles the gory sequence of a movie. Unless the government takes effective steps to prevent such incidents, they shall recur. The role of the police is most intriguing. For one thing, they do not act immediately when a complaint is lodged, most probably due to negligence. The result is that the great city of Delhi has become a den of terror for unaccompanied youngsters. Vimala Sankar, Nagercoil.

Spoilt sport

S. N. M. ABDI's "Coups on the maldan" (April 20) confirms the view that Calcutta soccer is in the doldrums. Internal wrangling, corruption and club politics are, by now, almost permanent features of maldan football. The astonishing sums of money offered to the stars in exchange for football of such poor standard are a sure sign of decadence. Money today means more to our soccer stars than donning the Indian jersey. The senior division league is an annual farce. The Big Three—Mohun Bagan, East Bengal and Mohammedan Sporting—shamelessly play year after year against lowly

clubs, woefully lacking in financial resources. This has got to stop. The Income Tax department should carry out an exhaustive investigation, and bring to book all who are involved in tax evasion and doubledealing. *Soutik Biswas, Calcutta.*

Trees and fees

THANKS for exposing the racket involving the indiscriminate issue of permits for felling trees in the tenanted areas of Orissa's Karanjia forest division ("Save Orissa's forests" by Amarendra Bose, April 6). The article should be an eye-opener to custodians of our forest wealth. Mr Bose would do well to also expose the role of the revenue authorities who share responsibility for the large-scale deforestation. *Chintamani Mohanty, Mayurbhanj.*

Owing to transmission mutilation, the word 'among' was omitted from the following sentence in Subir Roy's article "Assam Defies the Army" appearing in SUNDAY, APRIL 27: "Among those who got the worst of the blows (from police lathis) were women."

Blessed cops

OLGA TELLIS's report "A slum on fire" (April 6) revealed how the municipal authorities make money and slum lords operate. I think even god would be afraid of the savage rites of the police, if he interfered with them. What is most pathetic is not the destruction of the slum but of the peace and tranquility of the poor and homeless. Such atrocities are an attack on the whole of humanity.

S. Sankaranarayanan, Madurai.

The left is right

IN HIS article "Left Mrs Gandhi's target" (April 13) Barun Sengupta's statement: "it will be difficult for the left forces of the country to fill the vacuum in the near future" is very correct. True, the leftists have not been able to do much in the Hindi-speaking regions. This is mainly due to their weak rank and file and what's more, their lack of response to the situation. In spite of this, is there much of an option left for the Indian people? The Janata Government failed miserably to fulfil their promises, and now the present government is proving equally ineffective. Moreover, there is nothing like a political vacuum, really. What is more important is that the people would look for a Party which will try to bring about some basic changes in the socio-economic situation. Under the circumstances, the left forces are the only option.

Suddhasattwa Sarkar, Jalpaiguri.

Backward states' woes

CONGRATULATIONS for the report by Arun Bagchi "Assam: Is there a solution?" (April 20). It is unfortunate that the Union Government has ignored the legitimate demands of backward states. If the problem in Assam is economic, Bihar is a victim of cultural neglect. Moreover, Bihar is losing about Rs 2,500 crores per year because the head offices of its industries are situated outside the state. If the per capita income of Assam is the lowest, Bihar's is low too. The Centre must take cognizance of this and find a proper solution to the problems of backward states.

Bhaskar, Hajipur, Bihar.

IT IS time the Centre took a firm stand on the Assam issue. The move to expel a sizable number of people from the state is irrational because among them are thousands of people who have never been to West Bengal. And oil belongs to the entire country and not to Assam alone. If the government yields to the agitators it will have far-reaching consequences. Today it is Assam, tomorrow it will be another state.

Gautam Kumar Sinha, Calcutta.

THE agitation has caused serious harm to Assam. National integrity has also been threatened. It is time for a peaceful settlement. One cannot imagine how the expulsion of foreigners will help the state. Besides, the demand is not constitutionally valid. According to Article 10(1)(e)

Officer in waiting

THE item in "Delhi Diary" (April 13) captioned "Not in order" lives up to its title. It contains certain glaring inaccuracies. It says: "In an earlier case also the DG, BSF, known for his firm principles withstood pressure from the former Home Ministry and CBI Director, Mr R. D. Singh, to send an officer, Mr Batra, to the CBI on deputation from BSF." Mr Dwarka Nath Batra is a BSF officer who has bulldozed his way into the CBI, the country's premier investigation agency. Mr Batra's credentials are only his adeptness in doing the personal work of senior officers like Mr R. D. Singh and the former Home Secretary, Mr Nivas Vardhan. In the intelligence branch,

of the Constitution, every citizen has the fundamental right "to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India."

S. Narasimha Rao, Paradip Port.

THE demand for 1951 as the cut-off year for "foreign nationals" in Assam is in no way reasonable. How can a person who has spent three years in Assam be deported? Where will he go? He too has worked for the development of Assam. How can he be disowned? The cut-off year should be reviewed. Also, when one-third of the country is faced with drought, the agitators should think twice before picketing oil refineries, and causing, as a result, almost a Rs 100-crore loss to the country every month.

Gnyan Prakash, Gulbarga.

THE agitation in Assam is mainly meant to curb the leftists in the state. Vested interests, in order to check the leftists, have sent the religious and linguistic minorities into a frenzy. Though the fears of the Assamese are genuine, they can in no way justify the propagation of anti-Indian sentiments. Under the circumstances, no political Party of any reckoning—except the CPI(M) and some smaller left Parties—has made a positive effort to orientate the people of Assam and lead them in the right direction. Bringing the people back to the path of national unity and saving them from the influence of fascist and opportunist leaders is a task which has to be undertaken by all who matter politically.

Prateep Sen Gupta, Digboi.

Mr Batra has not served even for a day in any field unit and has no experience of any investigation.

Jagtar Singh.

Disputed facts

NOT only is your report "Engineering trouble at Bombay IIT" (April 13) quite vicious it contains false information. Your slanderous allegations against Prof Hira Lal, a former head of the Chemistry Department were shocking because he is one of those rare personalities who are principled and humane in their approach to issues and persons. Moreover his professional integrity is absolutely impeccable.

B. M. Deb, Chemistry Dept., I.I.T. Bombay

Bomb-astic claim

IN HIS letter entitled "Problem Party" (April 13), B. C. Khound comes up with a stupid remark that "the Janata Party's success in the 1977 poll was due to Babuji" which deserves severe criticism. May I ask Mr Khound where Babuji was when Janata faced a disastrous defeat in the midterm poll? For Mr Khound's

kind information, Babu Jagjivan Ram was in the front rank of the Janata. And everybody knows about the J-bomb that wasn't. And if the RSS was Babuji's headache then why didn't he rear up the Party he gave birth to after quitting the Janata? He walked straight into the lap of Devraj Urs's Congress without a second thought. Wouldn't he have done better to stick to the Janata? *Pradip Paul, Hailakandi*

COVER STORY

For the first time in the legal history of the country, the Supreme Court has ordered an open judicial enquiry into allegations of corruption, drug-trafficking, smuggling of liquor and sex rackets inside a jail — Tihar Jail of Delhi, India's premier jail. The allegations have been made in a petition by a jail convict to the Supreme Court. Later many of these charges were substantiated by an independent enquiry by a Supreme Court advocate appointed by the Court. AJOY BOSE visited Tihar Jail to interview prisoners and warders, and later met the Supreme Court advocate to file the following story of the murky goings-on behind the iron gates of Tihar.

The Terror of Tihar Jail



FIVE small-time businessmen are convicted for petty forgery. They are put in a B-class ward in Tihar Jail. The jail officials assign them *langar* (prison kitchen) duty immediately. The *langar* duties are the toughest jobs in the jail. Within a week, they have lost a considerable amount of weight and come begging to the superintendent to be taken off *langar* duty. The price is quoted. The businessmen have no other option but to agree. They are then given an easier assignment.

The canteen accounts book makes interesting reading. According to the jail manual no money is allowed inside Tihar Jail. How is it then that on April 26, 1979, items worth Rs 11,260 were sold at the canteen in return for cash?

It is early morning in Tihar Jail on April 11, 1980. There is suddenly a commotion inside the jail. Warder Kartar Singh has been found carrying *charas*. He was carrying *charas*—about 50 grams—inside his shoe heel. When confronted with the *charas*, the warder blurted out that he had been trafficking in *charas* at the behest of the superintendent and deputy superintendent who he claimed got a cut out of the sales. Just a few weeks ago, another warder was found pushing half a kg of opium into the letter box near the jail gates. He was reported to the jail authorities. But strangely no action has yet been taken against him.

Fifteen-year-old Lallu had hardly spent one night in the children's ward of the jail when he was approached by a convict from the men's ward. Was he interested in giving a massage in return for some money? He was also offered liberal facilities inside the jail. After some persuasion Lallu agreed. He would later discover that massage was an euphemism for homosexuality. But it was too late to back out. Besides, money and other facilities inside the jail were a strong temptation. Now, Lallu is a regular visitor to the men's ward and even has a regular lover.

Shocking as they may seem, the above incidents are extremely com-

monplace inside Tihar Jail—one of the largest and most famous jails of the country. Sprawling over 170 acres and with an official capacity of 1,273 which is normally stretched beyond 2,000, Tihar Jail is a unique example of exactly what a jail should not be. Ostensibly set up not merely to punish but also reform criminals, Tihar Jail is perhaps the best training ground for all sorts of vices and crimes. While the jail has been traditionally notorious, corruption and immorality have reached new heights in the past two years under the rule of superintendent B. L. Vij and deputy superintendent S. N. Trikha.

A petition filed by a life convict, Rakesh Kaushik, sentenced in the sensational Vidya Jain murder case has revealed that the jail has become a giant money spinning machine for jail officials. It is also a den of vice for select convicts while the rest of the prisoners languish on the rack of bribery, extortion and torture. The petition reached the Supreme Court despite the best efforts of the jail officials to stop it, and provoked Justice V. Krishna Iyer to appoint a Supreme Court advocate, Mr Subodh Markandeya, as amicus curie to conduct an enquiry into the functioning of the jail. Mr Markandeya visited Tihar Jail a number of times and found enough evidence to ask the Court to order an open judicial enquiry. The Court complied on April 30, 1980 and ordered an enquiry by a district and sessions judge. The judge has been asked to

submit his report by the end of September this year. The enquiry, the first of its kind in the legal history of the country, has sent shock waves inside Tihar, and jail officials as well as some privileged convicts are scurrying desperately to hide the skeletons inside the jail's cupboards.

The alarm that the announcement of the judicial enquiry has caused the jail administration is only natural. Corruption in Tihar is a many-headed monster. Bribery is a major source of money for jail officials. Most Tihar convicts admit that they have paid out money in varying sums for the barest of privileges. A good way of making money is to first single out the richer jail inmates. Once they are located, they can be pressurised or cajoled into parting with vast sums of money to make life easier inside jail.

The nature of bribes varies in different classes of wards. In the C class wards, where the majority of the prisoners are poor, the officials make their demands keeping in mind the prisoners' capacity to pay up. Since the conditions inside the C class wards are wretched, even the poor are ready to part with whatever little they have.

The B class ward proves to be more lucrative since there are a number of rich prisoners who can pay more. In return they get facilities of individual cells, electric stoves to cook their own food and in some cases even television sets. Among the exclusive prisoners in the B class ward in Tihar Jail today are Charles

Sobhraj, the international criminal and Sunil Batra, sentenced to death for killing a bank guard in cold blood in a bank van robbery case.

Prisoners have to give bribes too when they are released or for remission in their sentences. Jail officials have been known to delay the release of a prisoner inordinately by picking out minor errors in the release order, if their palms are not greased adequately. Remissions can also be bought for money.

The prisoners' canteen is also a treasure trove for jail officials to make illegal money. In fact, one of the main charges of Kaushik relates to the massive canteen swindle that is perpetrated by the jail authorities. Kaushik, who was canteen munshi for some time, had ample opportunity to have a ringside view to the various ways of making money (see interview).

There is also considerable evidence of manipulation of the accounts books of the canteen. False entries abound. For instance, during a month last year, Rs 100 worth of pakoras and 400 cups of tea were prepared in the canteen one day but the accounts books failed to mention the pakoras, while only 50 cups of tea were entered. According to Kaushik, at least Rs 150 was made underhand in the canteen every day while he was working as munshi.

According to Kaushik as well as other prisoners and even jail warders, there is large scale printing of duplicate canteen coupons. These coupons are the only form of

It is difficult for the warders to be honest

By Subodh Markandeya
The 17-year-old inmate of Tihar Jail, Rakesh Kaushik, has written a petition to the Supreme Court, alleging that the jail is a den of vice and corruption. He says that the jail officials are involved in a massive money-spinning machine, and that the prisoners are forced to pay bribes for the barest of privileges. He also alleges that the jail authorities are involved in a large-scale printing of duplicate canteen coupons, which are used to make money underhand.



Rakesh Kaushik, the inmate of Tihar Jail, has written a petition to the Supreme Court, alleging that the jail is a den of vice and corruption.

He also alleges that the jail authorities are involved in a large-scale printing of duplicate canteen coupons, which are used to make money underhand. He says that the jail is a den of vice and corruption, and that the prisoners are forced to pay bribes for the barest of privileges. He also alleges that the jail authorities are involved in a massive money-spinning machine, and that the prisoners are forced to pay bribes for the barest of privileges.

The money-spinning machine

At what better place than the jail, where the prisoners are forced to pay bribes for the barest of privileges, can a massive money-spinning machine be set up? The answer is, of course, yes. And this is exactly what has happened in Tihar Jail.

The money-spinning machine is set up in the jail's canteen, where the prisoners are forced to pay bribes for the barest of privileges. The jail authorities are involved in a large-scale printing of duplicate canteen coupons, which are used to make money underhand.

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The man who controls Tihar Jail is Charles Sobhraj

Rakesh Kaushik is a scared man today. His petition to the Supreme Court has stirred up a hornet's nest. According to him, his life is in constant danger as the jail authorities have ganged up with the powerful prisoner clique led by Charles Sobhraj against him ever since he filed his petition. He has already been intimidated twice. He expects to be physically assaulted soon. Convicted for life in the sensational Vidya Jain murder case, Kaushik has spent the past six years of his life in Tihar Jail. In the following interview taken inside the jail, he exposes the myriad levels of corruption and sex rackets behind the bars.

Q: In your petition to the Supreme Court you have made many serious charges against the jail authorities. Do you have any proof to substantiate these charges?

A: Well, as canteen munshi I had a good opportunity to see how corruption works inside Tihar. As canteen munshi I, myself, gave Rs 2,500 to the Superintendent and Rs 2,000 to the Deputy Superintendent every month. The canteen accounts book as well as enquiries from prisoners and warders will substantiate all my charges about corruption from the prisoners' canteen. I have already offered to produce evidence which would conclusively prove my charges.

Q: What are the other ways the jail authorities make money?

A: Sugar, mustard oil, firewood and other items are supplied by a particular jail contractor with whose cooperation, the earnings from the sale and consumption of these items go into the pockets of the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent. Short supplies and overcharging for expendable articles both in the stores and canteen are made. Duplicate items, underweighing of food packets—there are so many ways the jail authorities are making money every day.

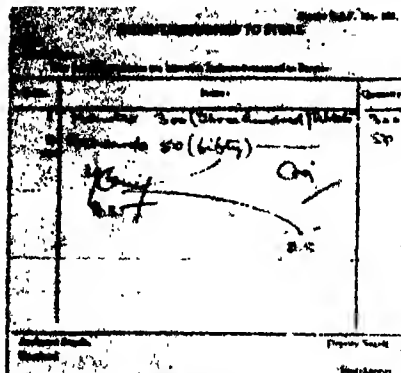
Q: How much money do you think the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent are making a month?

A: God only knows. But if you ever visit the house of the Superintendent or the Deputy Superintendent, it will be clear that such a luxurious standard of living cannot be maintained with government salaries alone.

Q: Are prisoners fleeced of their money also?

A: At every step inside the jail there is bribery. There is not a single step we can take here without giving money. The condi-

tion of the ward you are put in, the sort of labour you are assigned and the facilities you are allowed—every single thing depends on



Indents for Mandraz

how much money you are ready to shell out. Even when the release orders come for a prisoner, he has to give money to the Superintendent and other officers. Or else they hold up the release orders by making some minor discrepancy in the father's name or the date of birth. There is no escape for the prisoner.

Q: You have also alleged in your petition that there were sex rackets inside Tihar. Could you elaborate on your charges?

A: Homosexuality is rampant inside the jail. There are about 200 boys under 18 inside the children's ward. These boys are supplied to various prisoners for money. The Superintendent and other jail officers are quite aware of all this but they do nothing. Most of these boys are juvenile delinquents and after this sort of experience in Tihar and such intimate contact with hardened convicts, they themselves become lifetime criminals.

Q: How about sex rackets involving women?

A: In the ladies ward, any new entrant is immediately stripped naked by some hardened women convicts, mostly professional prostitutes. She is then tortured in various ways. The most common way of torture is to shove red chilly up the vagina. These new entrants are tortured this way to force them to a life of prostitution after they are released.

Q: Is there any prostitution inside the jail?

A: I know for a fact that the Deputy Superintendent goes to visit the ladies ward late at night. Although I have no absolute proof, I have information that women from the ladies ward are supplied to officers and select prisoners.

Q: How about drug abuse?

A: There are extremely few prisoners who do not take drugs in Tihar. Even the people who did not take drugs before they came to this jail invariably get started on drugs. You see life here is very depressing and drugs allow us an escape. If drugs are so freely available, very few prisoners can resist taking them. Over 50,000 rupees worth of drugs are consumed every month in Tihar.

Q: How is the stuff brought inside the jail?

A: In every conceivable way. In toothpaste tubes, in the heels of shoes, inside cans of foodstuffs—there are a variety of ways in which drugs are smuggled in.

Q: And you say that this is done with the knowledge of jail officials?

A: Why just knowledge? I would say with the active encouragement of jail officials. You see, the jail officials have their own cut in the drug racket. This is also a way to control the prisoners, particularly women prisoners. Some of the women who are hooked on drugs are desperate enough to sleep with some of the officials if they are promised drugs.

Q: You have also accused some fellow prisoners in your petition.

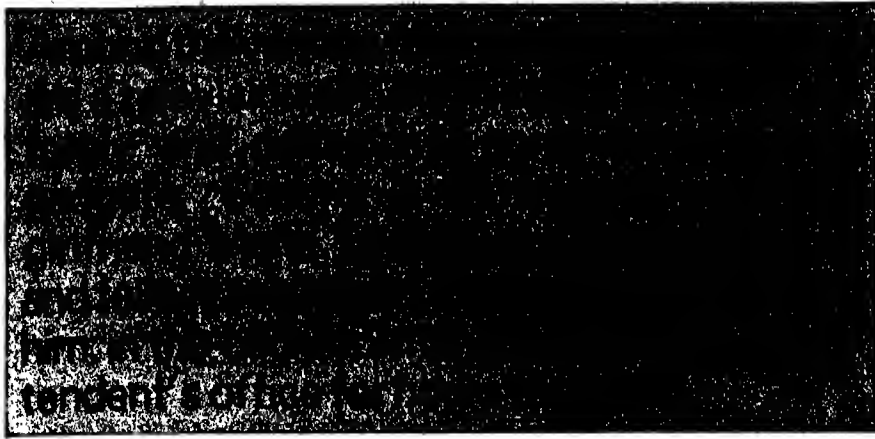
A: The man who actually controls Tihar Jail today is not the Superintendent or the Deputy Superintendent or any other jail official. The man who controls Tihar Jail is Charles Sobhraj—the international criminal. He struts about the prison like he owns it. He carries a tape recorder strapped to his thigh. He has taped some evidence against the jail officials and is using this to blackmail them. He gets all sorts of favours which are denied to other prisoners. He has sex with a foreign woman prisoner, Marie who was arrested along with him, in the back room of the (office of the) Deputy Superintendent who is no better than Sobhraj's pimp. He (Sobhraj) has got Tihar jail under his thumb.

Q: Are there any others with him?

A: There is a gang of three—all accused in the bank van robbery case led by Sunil Batra. They are allowed special favours including separate cells, select cellmates and in the case of Sobhraj and Batra—television sets. They get the plushiest of prison jobs and have a strong hold over the functioning of the prison.

Q: Have you been threatened after you filed the petition?

A: I live in constant danger every day. What I am really afraid of is not any direct action by the jail authorities themselves. But I think that the Sobhraj-Batra clique is out to get me. I appeal to the court and the authorities to give me protection.



currency allowed inside the jail. The coupon normally has the seal of the superintendent of the jail but the present superintendent has strangely not prepared his seal and instead is using the seal of his predecessor. There is, therefore, little way of checking the duplication.

There is also a lot of cash floating in and around the jail although even a rupee inside is completely illegal. According to conservative estimates, a total of nearly Rs 20,000 circulates in Tihar Jail every day. Even in the canteen accounts books there are a number of entries which show that items have been sold in exchange for cash and not coupons.

THE other ways of making money are bogus tenders from contractors. One of the main suppliers to the jail is Jaswant Rai. In 1977, Jaswant Rai was stopped from supplying provisions to the jail by the then superintendent M. L. Batra on charges of providing sub-standard goods. After the present superintendent came to power, he recalled Jaswant Rai. Rai is once again the main supplier to the jail. According to Kaushik, and this is substantiated by other prisoners and warders, the jail officials have come to an arrangement with Jaswant Rai, so that a large number of items bought for the jail from him are actually sold for profit privately. There are also serious allegations of supplies of sub-standard goods from the same supplier. According to Seeshram, a head warder, Jaswant Rai recently sold cloth for warders' uniforms which later turned out to be sub-standard. After the Warders' Association raised a hue and cry, the cloth was returned and new bales of cloth were brought.

The superintendent and deputy superintendent live lavishly: large numbers of convicts work as servants in their houses. The superintendent has four servants while the deputy superintendent has two. Besides, four warders are on guard duty at both their houses for the whole night. Other luxuries the superintendent indulges in include more than 100 flower pots at his house. The flower pots were actually meant for the prison and bought with government money. Whenever important personalities visit the prison, the flower pots

are used to decorate the prison. As soon as the visitors go away, the flower pots are returned to the superintendent's house.

Such corruption among jail officials has naturally had its effect on the prisoners, all of whom are criminals in the first place. For instance, there is a flourishing drug racket inside the jail. Even the jail superintendent admits that use of intoxicating drugs is fairly common inside Tihar.

In his affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the superintendent says: "Prisoners are drug addicts and they have links with their fellow criminals in the underworld. Such prisoners get opportunity of smuggling in prohibited articles when they are taken out to the court in connection with their trials, where their friends meet them. It is also on the occasions when the friends and relatives of the prisoners visit them in prison that these articles are passed on to them. These articles are attempted to be brought in hidden in false bottoms of ghee tins, and cavities of soap and gur cakes, *kuicha chholas*, soles of chappals and shoes, concealed in long hair and even in *langots* (a sort of underwear) worn by prisoners". What the superintendent fails to mention however is that everyone including visitors, prisoners and warders are searched when they enter the jail. That is, everyone except the jail officials. Both prisoners and warders claim that there is clear complicity between officials and prisoners using drugs. Mr Markandeya also found official indents for buying Mandrax in the jail accounts book (see photostat). The indents have been placed before the Supreme Court.

According to conservative estimates, nearly Rs 50,000 worth of drugs are consumed in the jail every month. Of these drugs, Mandrax, in tablet form is, perhaps, the most common. Each tablet normally available in the market for 37 paise is sold inside for nearly Rs 4. Other drugs commonly used in the jail are *charas* and opium.

Along with a flourishing drug racket homosexuality is rampant. The officials have done little to check this. Juvenile delinquents who are kept in the juvenile ward are easy prey to lusty convicts. The convicts pay money to warders and jail officials to arrange partners to come to

their wards. Most of these delinquents become hardened criminals at a tender age since they are so intimate with professional criminals inside the jail.

Prostitution inside the jail is infrequent but not completely unheard of. According to Kaushik, convicts who have a lot of money or influence are supplied with women from the women's ward regularly. He also alleges that certain jail officials also make use of their power to seduce women prisoners. One of the popular ways of inducing women prisoners to sleep with them, is to first introduce them to drugs. After they become drug addicts, the drug supply is cut off unless they agree to sleep with the convicts. Some desperate women are known to give in.

Inside the women's ward, hardened convicts, mostly prostitutes and brothel madames, rule the roost. A new entrant is normally stripped naked and tortured till she submits completely to them. Some of them are forced to promise that they will become prostitutes after release.

Kaushik has also made serious allegations in his petition against a ruling prisoner clique led by the international criminal Charles Sobhraj. Most prisoners and warders admit that Sobhraj is probably the most important inmate of Tihar Jail today. Using vast resources of money and an extremely wily mind, Sobhraj has managed to get himself a comfortable niche inside Tihar and is the envy of all other prisoners.

Among the various facilities given to Sobhraj are a television set, permission to walk about freely and possess all sorts of electronic gadgets. Sobhraj is also allowed to meet his girlfriend Marie Leclerc, a woman prisoner and fellow accused in the case that convicted him, in the backroom of the deputy superintendent's office for hours together.

According to Kaushik, Sobhraj is allowed all these facilities: first because he has a lot of money and second, Kaushik alleges that Sobhraj has a lot of damaging evidence against the jail officials which he is using to blackmail them.

Along with Sobhraj some other prisoners have ganged up. There is Sunil Batra who also enjoys a privileged status. While jail officials deny giving them additional privileges, there is no doubt that they have encouraged considerable factionalism inside the jail. For instance, Kaushik's petition which contained a number of charges against Charles Sobhraj and Batra, was reportedly shown to them by the superintendent although it was given to him in strict confidence. The mounting tension resulted in an attack by Sobhraj, Batra and some other prisoners on a convict, Srinivas Sharma, an associate of Kaushik, in April this year. Sharma, who had given evidence to M. Markandeya when he visited the jail, was attacked with knives and when a warder Ram Meher tried to save him, he too was injured. Cases have been filed against the assailants and the Delhi Lt. Governor is likely to take a decision on the case soon.

In Tihar Jail even an innocent will turn criminal



Rachna Rai

Visitors of prisoners inside the jail

Suhodh Markandeya is the Supreme Court advocate appointed by the Court as an amicus curie to conduct an independent enquiry to substantiate the allegations of Rakesh Kaushik. Markandeya visited the jail several times and says in this interview, he was shocked at the functioning of the jail.

Q: As an independent observer, how much substance do you think there is behind the allegations of corruption and immorality in Tihar?

A: I visited Tihar a number of times and talked to a large number of jail officials, warders and prisoners. There is no doubt (that there is) a lot of truth in what Rakesh Kaushik has alleged in his petition. In my report to the Supreme Court I have pointed out large scale discrepancies in the accounts of the prison canteen, evidence of rampant drug-trafficking and corruption among the jail officials.

Q: Did the jail officials cooperate with you when you were conducting your enquiry?

A: On the contrary, they seemed to be very reluctant to part with any information. The first time I went to visit the jail, I had to wait (for) hours to see the petitioner Rakesh Kaushik. Subsequently, the jail officials

also failed to produce accounts books as well as star witnesses whom I (had) asked to see to get evidence. For instance, I discovered official indentation of Mandrax tablets carrying the signature of the Assistant Superintendent, Y. C. Tyagi. Although I repeatedly asked to see Mr Tyagi, the jail Superintendent did not comply with my wishes. They also seemed very evasive in their answers. There is definitely something fishy going on in Tihar.

Q: What else did you find that struck you as fishy inside the jail?

A: A lot of things. For instance, cash seems to be flowing freely inside the jail although, according to the law, there should not be any money used inside the jail at all. A number of entries in the accounts book kept by Rakesh Kaushik showed items sold at the canteen for cash. How the jail officials have been allowing this, I cannot understand. There also seems to be a pretty lucrative drug racket going inside. Everyone, jail officials, warders and prisoners openly admit that it is fairly easy to get drugs inside the jail. How we are going to reform criminals in such an atmosphere, beats me completely.

Q: How about allegations of homosexuality?

A: The matter is such that it is impossible to get any direct proof on this. But, most people inside the jail admit to this practice.

Q: There are also allegations of special privileges to select prisoners?

A: (On) that there was a lot of evidence. For instance, in Sunil Batra's cell, I found electronic gadgets, expensive cigarettes and other luxury items. The conditions in the C ward on the other hand are atrocious. There are also other discrepancies. Both Sunil Batra as well as Billa and Ranga have been sentenced to death for murder. Batra has a luxury cell but Billa and Ranga are still in solitary confinement in the death row from where they can see the gallows every day. Why should there be such a discrimination? When I asked this question to somebody in the jail, he just shrugged and said that the difference between Batra and Billa and Ranga is that while the former has money and influence the latter have none.

Q: In short, do you think Tihar Jail is serving its ostensible purpose of reforming criminals and turning them away from a path of crime.

A: Oh no. In my few visits to the jail, I am convinced that Tihar Jail is an institution where even an innocent person will become a criminal.

Prisoners have rights too

THE action taken by the Supreme Court recently on allegations of maladministration in Tihar Jail is most timely. The court gave certain directions to the jail authorities last December and followed them up by appointing Mr Subodh Markandeya as amicus curiae in a petition in which, also, allegations were made of malpractices in Tihar Jail. Mr Markandeya's report, submitted to the court on April 18, pinpointed several serious shortcomings in the jail administration.

The action taken in the case by the court will, no doubt, be of great public interest. But far more consequential is the fact that it is now well established in law that the citizen does not lose all his rights and becomes a non-person once he is put in prison even if the imprisonment is justified or lawful. He is entitled to exercise all the fundamental rights to the extent it is possible for him to do so in conditions of imprisonment. Thus, he can write a book in prison and publish it. Moreover, the fundamental rights provide him with effective protection against maltreatment in jail. That they have not served well so far is due to ignorance on the part of prisoners and jailers and, regretfully, to the slow pace of precedent. This lapse has now been mended by the Supreme Court.

Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees to every person, citizen or alien, the fundamental right not to be "deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." And Article 19(1) (d) guarantees to every citizen the right "to move freely throughout the territory of India" subject to the imposition of reasonable restrictions in the interests of "the general public." This permits lawful imprisonment, but no more. It does not permit maltreatment in jail.

The Supreme Court has invoked these two fundamental rights, guaranteeing liberty, to ensure that no more of the citizen's liberty is taken away than is strictly necessary in cases of imprisonment.

As Mr Justice Krishna Iyer put it, "imprisonment does not spell farewell to fundamental rights, although, by a realistic reappraisal, courts will refuse to recognise the full panoply of Part III (of the Constitution, embodying the fundamental rights) enjoyed by a free citizen."

The Court, he said, has a continuing duty to see that the judicial

Civil Liberties

By A. G. NOORANI



warrant which deprives a person of his liberty is not exceeded. "Where a prison practice or internal instruction places harsh restrictions on jail life, breaching guaranteed rights, the court

directly comes in. Every prison sentence is a conditioned deprivation of life and liberty, with civilized norms built in and unlimited trauma interdicted. In this sense, judicial policing of prison practices is implied in the sentencing power. The criminal judiciary have thus a duty to guardian their sentences and visit prisons when necessary. Many of them do not know or exercise this obligation." In sum, there must be some correlation between the deprivation of freedom and the proper functions of a correctional system.

"If a whole atmosphere of constant fear of violence, frequent torture and denial of opportunity to improve oneself is created or if medical facilities and basic elements of care and comfort necessary to sustain life are refused, then the humane jurisdiction of the court will also become operational based on Article 19. Other forms of brutal unreasonableness and anti-rehabilitative attitudes violative of constitutionality may be thought of in a penal system but we wish to lay down only a broad guideline that where policies, with a 'Zoological touch', which do not serve valid penal objectives are pursued in penitentiaries so as to inflict conditions so unreasonable as to frustrate the ability of inmates to engage in rehabilitation, the court is not helpless."

Unfortunately, the Jail Manuals are antiquated, as the Supreme Court has pointed out. Some of them still retain anachronistic provisions like whipping and the ban on the use of the Gandhi cap.

The best yardstick for determining whether prison conditions are proper or not is the body of rules framed by the UN and known as the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Amnesty International and other such bodies invoke these rules in their investigations. The Supreme Court has given them the imprimatur of its approval. The Ismail Commission on the treatment of DMK prisoners in February 1976 referred to them extensively. The Jail Manuals must be up-dated to conform to them; else, many of their provisions will be struck down by the courts as violative of the fundamental rights. That is not a task for the jail authorities but for the state governments and also for the government of India. The superintendent of the Tihar Jail told Mr Markandeya that adherence to the Standard Minimum Rules and revision of Jail Manual fell within the domain of the Delhi Administration, not the jail authorities.

The madness of P.C. Sethi

Can the Cabinet Minister be crazy?

By a Special Correspondent



PRAKASH Chand Sethi, the Union Minister for Works and Housing, has emerged as a man to be watched in the capital. No, he has not been promoted to an important position in the durbars of I, Safdarjung Road like Jagdish Tytler. Nor has he proved to be a rebel ruling Party leader like Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna. It is his behaviour which has become the talk of the town.

Mr Sethi had earned the reputation of being an eccentric even during his earlier tenure as a central Minister. During the Emergency he was relieved of the Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilisers portfolio and made a Minister without portfolio following an incident at an international geologists' meeting which caused grave embarrassment to the government. His appointment as a Cabinet Minister in January 1980, therefore, was viewed with apprehension, and Mr Sethi did not take long to prove that his detractors were right.

Within a few weeks of his being sworn in as the Minister for Works and Housing, with additional temporary charge of the Petroleum and Chemicals portfolio, Mr Sethi let it be widely known that he was only interested in the Petroleum and Chemicals portfolio and would be devoting more time to his additional temporary charge. His interest in the portfolio could be understood; after all, he had held it earlier and the job of a Petroleum Minister is far more exciting than that of a Housing Minister. But in the bargain the Works and Housing ministry's work suffered and till early April as many as seven Ministers and over a hundred new MPs were still without houses. When these facts became public, Mr Sethi found a scapegoat in the director of estates, Mr Biwas, who was removed from his post, and two of his deputy directors, who were transferred.

As temporary Petroleum Minister Mr Sethi called a Press conference a few months back to announce the government's policy regarding aviation fuel. He authorised the Indian Oil Corporation's chairman, Mr C. R. Dasgupta, to answer some technical questions. But while Mr Dasgupta was replying to newsmen's queries

regarding the possibility of the country importing a certain variety of fuel needed for small executive aircraft, suddenly Mr Sethi snubbed the IOC chairman for talking on subjects beyond his knowledge. Mr Dasgupta, with 33 years of experience in the industry behind him, had to keep quiet.

But junior personnel of the IOC were not as docile as their chairman and a brush with them at Madras led to the ultimate departure of Mr Sethi from the Petroleum portfolio. Mr Sethi had been sent by the Congress high command to Madras to negotiate with the DMK leader, Mr M. Karunanidhi. Mr Sethi wanted his trip to be treated as a 'secret' so that he could visit some places 'incognito'. But, simultaneously, his secretariat was told to ask for a siren-blowing police escort at Madras, a privilege which is normally reserved only for the President and the Prime Minister. After meeting the DMK chief, Mr Sethi decided to pay a surprise visit to a kerosene retail outlet at an old cooperative store in the T. Nagar area of the city. There, an old woman came forward to complain that kerosene was being sold at Rs 4 a litre. Without any verification, the Minister ordered the licence of the shop to be cancelled.

When an IOC officer accompanying Mr Sethi suggested that the woman should be asked to produce a cash memo to substantiate the charge (this being a cooperative store, cash memos were essential), Mr Sethi told the official to shut up because he knew what to do. A little while later, he drove into a petrol pump operated by an ex-serviceman. There a farmer complained to him that diesel was not being given to him despite stocks being available. Mr Sethi immediately ordered the cancellation of the dealer's licence. When the dealer protested, pointing out that the farmer was being denied diesel because he wanted it in a can, which was in contravention of the Explosives Act, the Minister was infuriated. He asked the dealer to immediately supply diesel to the farmer. But the ex-serviceman stood his ground and the IOC official, who had already earned the

Minister's wrath at the kerosene shop, meekly intervened to point out that the dealer was doing the right thing under the law.

The Minister immediately ordered the suspension of the chirpy official and left for the airport on his way to Delhi. Soon after his departure the local unit of the IOC Officers' Association met and passed a resolution deploring the Minister's behaviour and, pointing out the earlier incident with chairman Dasgupta, appealed to the Prime Minister to restrain the Minister in his dealings with IOC officers. The appeal seems to have worked, because soon afterwards, with the budget session of the Parliament round the corner, Mrs Gandhi decided to relieve Mr Sethi of his fancied portfolio.

Churchill, Chamberlain and Nehru

There are many hilarious stories about Mr Sethi which are narrated by his supporters and detractors alike. He was said to have been a normal man while he was the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh till 1975. Even his detractors admit that he did certain unprecedented things as a Chief Minister, due to which he became very popular. But his supporters got a shock in August 1976 when one day, Mr Sethi reached Bhopal from Delhi as a Union Minister. It was raining cats and dogs, and the 200-odd supporters gathered at the railway station were wondering whether it would be advisable for their leader to travel in an open jeep, which he normally preferred. Mr Sethi emerged from the train in a three-piece suit, wearing a tie and a bowler hat, with a cigar in his mouth. He held an umbrella in his left hand and under his right armpit he had a small baton. Shouts of 'Sethiji zindabad' rent the air. Despite the rain, Mr Sethi insisted on travelling in his favourite open

jeep so that the people of Bhopal could have his 'darshan'. He stood on the bonnet of the jeep and started addressing his bewildered supporters, who were getting their first glimpse of the eccentric behaviour of their beloved 'Sethi'.

Mr Sethi said: "Jab app log mujhe cigar haath mein liye dekhen, tab samjhiye main Churchill hoon; jab main chhatri ke saath dikhoon tab main Chamberlain hoon; aur jab mere haath mein baton hota hai tab samjhiye ki Jawaharlal Nehru aap ke saamne khara hai (when you see me with a cigar in mouth, then think that I am Churchill; when there is an umbrella, then I am Chamberlain; and when you see me with a baton, then you should think that Nehru is standing in front of you)". This, according to reliable sources, was the first public display of eccentric behaviour by Mr Sethi.

That trip to Bhopal was even more eventful. After the day when he had imagined himself to be an amalgamation of Churchill, Chamberlain and Nehru, Mr Sethi went for a morning walk and strolled into a swimming pool named after him (before his tenure as the Chief Minister there was no swimming pool in Bhopal and the state capital's first pool has been named after Mr Sethi). For two hours in the morning the pool is reserved for ladies only, and the honourable Minister had walked in during the ladies' hour. Nonchalantly, wearing a suit and a with cigar in hand, Mr Sethi dived into the pool, sending the bewildered ladies shrieking into the cloak room.

After that, stories of Mr Sethi's 'madness' spread like wildfire, and his fate was sealed, at least temporarily, when he went to address an international geologists' meet in New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan. During the course of his speech he declared that he had been loyal to Jawaharlal Nehru, and he declared his loyalty to Mrs Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and even Rahul (Rajiv Gandhi's son). He abused the Americans and the Russians in filthy language and proclaimed that ultimately the supremacy of the Aryan race would prevail. After that, Mrs Gandhi asked Mr Sethi to 'take rest' and retained him in the Cabinet as a Minister without portfolio. Interestingly, he was not removed from the coveted post of treasurer of the ATCC, which he held during the Emergency.

Another story which made its rounds on the capital's grapevine during the Emergency related to an incident on an Indian Airlines flight from Gwalior. Mr Sethi had pushed the bell, summoning the air hostess. It was a small aircraft with a small crew and the air hostess took a little time before responding to Mr Sethi's call. The Minister was furious. He abused the air hostess and threatened to get her suspended. One gentleman who was sitting in a row behind Mr Sethi, protested about the manner in which Mr Sethi was talking to a woman. Mr Sethi paused for a moment and told him that he had

recognised the passenger. He got up from his seat, baton in hand, and went to the cockpit and ordered the pilot to radio to Delhi that P. C. Sethi had recognised a 'known smuggler' who was on the flight and ordered the Delhi police to be on the tarmac when the aircraft reached Delhi. In the mean time, for rest of the duration of the flight, the Union Minister, baton in hand, stood near the 'smuggler', as if to ensure that he did not escape from the airborne plane.

When the flight reached Delhi, Mr Sethi proudly descended from the aircraft and 'handed over' the 'smuggler' to the waiting police. The police officer, who had heard of Mr Sethi's eccentric ways, waited for the Minister to depart and then questioned the 'smuggler' about his identity. The caution on the part of the policeman paid off for the 'smuggler' turned out to be a senior government official who had gone out of the capital on duty.

Mr Sethi had strayed away from Mrs Gandhi after the 1978 split but found his way back to the Congress(I) fold. After the Lok Sabha results were out, Mr Sethi was keen that his name should be in the Cabinet list. So, he launched a private campaign to win over the newly elected youngsters from Madhya Pradesh who were hostile to him. He called two of them, and in the course of discussions mentioned in passing that he was aware that the youngsters had incurred personal expenses during the election campaign and that they were hardpressed for money, particularly during their stay in an expensive place like New Delhi. He, therefore, offered them Rs 20,000 each as his 'contribution' to make good the losses incurred by them in the elections. One Youth Congress(I) leader, who has been a Sethi-loyalist for many years, was present when Mr

Sethi was giving money to his arch rivals. After they had left, he told Sethi about the expenses incurred by him in Mr Sethi's campaign. Mr Sethi promptly said, "Ghabrao mat, main tumhe paise nahin doonga (Don't worry I won't give you money)".

But Sethi was apparently not satisfied with having given money to the youngsters of his rival camp. He also provided them with air tickets to enable them to be at Bangalore on January 13 to witness Mr Gundu Rao's swearing-in ceremony. By this act Mr Sethi killed two birds with one stone. He pleased Mr Gundu Rao, and ensured that his opponent's youth force would be missing from Delhi on the eve of Cabinet formation on January 14.

Holi with Jagjivan Ram

This year's holi saw Mr Sethi in a jubilant mood. On the day of holi, he was seen entering Babu Jagjivan Ram's house, with a 'pichkari' in hand. Babuji had resigned from the post of leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party a few days earlier. Sethi asked Babuji why he had not attended the all-party meeting on Assam called by Mrs Gandhi the day earlier. Babuji pointed out to him that as he was no longer the leader of the JPP, he had no locus standi at the meeting. To this Mr Sethi replied, "To kya hua, aap to saare desh ke नेता hain (So what you are a leader of the whole country)". Then he went on to recall how he as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had tackled the dacoits and lamented, "Main kya karoon, mujhe to sirf tel nikalne ke kaam mein laga rakha hai, Assam mein sakhti barhani chahiye (But what can I do? I have been only entrusted with the job of extracting oil. We should deal with Assam sternly)". Babuji was amused at such talk by his former Cabinet colleague. Mr Sethi stayed on for some time, smearing gulal on those present. After a while, he suddenly turned to Babuji and said, "Mujhe salah dijiye, main Charan Singh ke ghar holi khelne jagam ki nahin? Aap jaisa kahenge waisa hi karoonga (Advise me, should I go to Charan Singh's house to play holi? I will do as you say)". This was an embarrassing question for Babuji, but before he could reply, Mr Sethi had made up his mind. He picked up a handful of gulal from Babuji's house and left, proclaiming loudly that he was going to Atal Behari Vajpayee (both Charan Singh and Vajpayee are Babuji's arch rivals).

The battle for tickets in the Congress(I) on the eve of the Assembly polls saw Mr Sethi in a more eccentric mood. The meeting of the state election committee was to be held at Bhopal. Mr Sethi had accompanied Mr Sanjay Gandhi to Ajmer that day and he flew in to Bhopal for the



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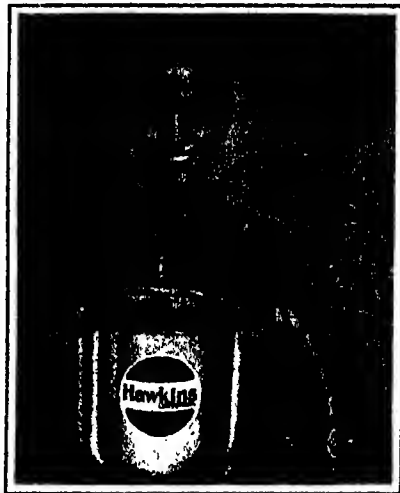
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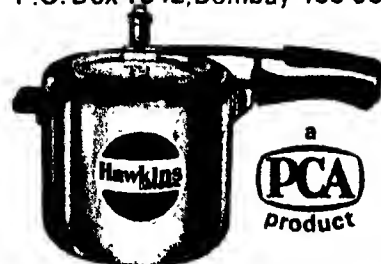
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meeting in a state government aircraft. His clothes were soiled with pan juice. He ordered the pilot to fly back to Delhi to fetch his clothes and a case of scotch whisky. Mr Sethi's fifth (youngest) daughter, Kanta, also flew from Bhopal in that aircraft.

Mr Sethi has a fondness for government planes. According to sources close to him, when he is power drunk, he refers to the two Beechcraft planes of the MP government as his 'Vespa scooters', the helicopter of the state government as his 'bicycle', and the Indian Air Force's VIP squadron planes, which are often used by him, are referred to as his 'Ambassador cars'. That is how he orders for his transport. If he wants to fly by the Beechcrafts, he tells his PA to arrange for his 'vespa scooter'!

Another weakness of Mr Sethi is drinking. Many attribute his eccentricity to heavy drinking. According to knowledgeable sources, he does not drink in the early hours of the day, or whenever he visits the PM's house to meet Mrs Gandhi, Mr Sanjay Gandhi or Mr R. K. Dhawan. But around eleven in the forenoon, his drinking starts. In the daytime he drinks gin and after sundown he switches over to scotch whisky. He does not take either water or soda along with his drinks. Instead, the entire glass is filled with crushed ice, and the alcohol. Often he has a bad throat due to this extravagant manner of drinking. Apart from these two varieties of alcohol, he is said to be fond of a cocktail, which he advised his followers also to consume recently.

As the story goes, a few weeks back Mr Sethi was talking to a group of admirers at the Ujjain circuit house. He disclosed to them the secret of his "youth" and told them that if they tried out his recipe, they would always score with young women. His recipe for retaining vitality is this: take two raw eggs, beat them up, then add two pegs of whisky, again beat up the mixture, add one pao of milk, beat up the mixture, and then immediately gulp down the 'elixir' and go to bed with a woman...you would never fail!

Mr Sethi likes to meet people early in the morning. He can happily ask people to see him at four in the morning, summon Press conferences (while in Madhya Pradesh) at six, and take pride in the fact that even his rivals come to see him in the early hours. In the third week of April, while the Congress(I) state election committee was meeting in Bhopal, Mr Sethi occupied the pride of place. No one wanted to displease him, such was the dictat from the high command. The committee, therefore, met only when Mr Sethi was around, and adjourned when he decided to walk out. It was during these days that Mr Sethi's rival in Madhya Pradesh, Mr Vidya Charan Shukla, decided to call on him. Mr Sethi asked Shukla to see him at four a.m. At six, when Mr Sethi's supporters gathered for an early morning 'darshan' a jubilant Mr

Sethi told them: 'Agar Vidya Charan mujhse milne char baje aa sakte hain, tum log itni der tak kyon soote rahte ho? (If V. C. Shukla can come to see me at four, then why do you people keep sleeping till so late?)'.

But during the distribution of Party tickets Mr Sethi alienated a large number of his supporters and annoyed political bigwigs in his state. When prospective candidates went to him with their bio-data, claiming a ticket because they had been to jail in the past few years, he grew wild with rage. "Jail to goondon ki jagah hai, tum Assembly mein kya karoge? (Jail is a place for ruffians, what would you do in the Assembly?)." Kalyan Joshi of Ghosla village in Ujjain, who was at the receiving end of this conversation, being an old Congressman, was adamant. He insisted that when jailgoing had been adopted as a norm for the allocation of tickets, then he was going to utilise his jail certificate to the maximum possible extent. Mr Sethi snapped back: "Kya tum mere liye jail gaye the? Indira Gandhi ke liye gaye the, unhi ke paas jao ticket ke liye (Did you go to jail for my sake? You went for Mrs Gandhi. Please go to her for your ticket)".

While he displeased the rank and file like this, his recipe for the bigwigs was different. Having pleased Messrs Kamal Nath and Arjun Singh in the past few months, Mr Sethi suddenly decided to switch support to Madhavrao Scindia, the son of the former Maharaja of Gwalior. While canvassing support for the list put up by Mr Scindia, he reportedly told Mr Kamal Nath and Mr Arjun Singh that he was not going to recommend the cases of 'maharajas' like them. That is said to have created a wide gulf between him and Mr Kamal Nath, for whom, till a few weeks back Mr Sethi was prepared to do anything. His numerous air trips to Madhya Pradesh in his 'scooter', 'bicycle' and 'car' were mostly undertaken in order to please the MP from Chindwara.

Mr Sethi and his family planning

Mr Sethi has perhaps earned the distinction of being one leader who has most colourfully portrayed to the people the need for introducing family planning. While addressing a largely attended public meeting at Rajwada in Indore district, he said recently: "Sanjayji ke pariwar niyojan ke karyakram ko ko palan nahin karta. Mere yahan bhi paanch larki-yau hain. Parantu paanch kaise hui? Teen hui thi; mere pitaji ne kaha ki ek larka zaroori hai. Maine kaha, nahin, main karkhana band karna chahta hoon. Unhone kaha ki ek baar aur koshish karo. Maine zoron se koushish kiya, par phir larki! Uske baad mere doston aur iyotishion ne kaha ki koshish ek baar aur honi

chahiye. Par panchwi baar bhi larki hui. Phir maine karkhana band kar diya (Nobody implements Sanjay's family planning programme. Even I have five daughters. I wanted to close the 'factory' after the third daughter but my father was adamant that I should try for a son. I tried, but I got a fourth daughter. Then my friends and astrologers told me that if I tried again, there would be a son. But again there was a daughter. After that I closed down my 'factory')".

His fondness for the family planning programme has perhaps a fanatical overtone. Recently a woman went to see him at Ujjain with a petition that her husband, a state government employee, be transferred back to Ujjain. He stared at her for some time and then thundered. "Pati ko sarkar ne door bhej diya to achha kya. Usko paas bulwa kaar bachche paida karna chahti ho? Kore kaaaz paar likh kar do ki usay agar yahan bhej diya to tum bachche paida nahin karoqi, to main tumhara kaam karoonga (If your husband has been sent away from you by the government, then it's good. Why do you want him near you? To procreate? Giye me a written undertaking that you will not have children if he is transferred back to Ujjain)".

But Mr Sethi's recent fascination for former dacoits perhaps surpasses all his other likes and dislikes. One fine morning, while the battle for Congress(I) tickets was on in Bhopal, Mr Sethi was seen driving around town with former dacoit Mohar Singh. A day before, there had been a violent clash between Mr Sethi's supporters and opponents outside the venue of the election committee meeting. When Mr Sethi reached the circuit house, where the meeting was being held, he spotted a well-known building contractor of Bhopal among the crowd. Pointing towards Mohar Singh, he invited the contractor to have a bout of wrestling with the former dacoit. Before Mr Sethi could make up his mind about the venue of the bout, the contractor had taken to his heels, knowing the hazards of staying around when Mr Sethi was in one of his unpredictable moods.

His 'madness' has become so widely known that *Nai Dunia*, a local newspaper of Indore, has written two editorials in the past few weeks, citing instances of his eccentric behavior. An example of the public outcry in MP against Mr Sethi's behaviour and deeds was available from a letter to the editor published in the May 1 edition of a Bhopal daily, *Madhya Pradesh Chronicle*. Written by one Mr Bharat Deshpande, the letter said: "Recently Union Minister Shri P. C. Sethi ordered removing all the speedbreakers (on the roads) of the state. Speedbreakers are used to avoid accidents, control speed, to increase factor of safety more on roads. If anybody's vehicle or car are broken, speedbreakers are to be blamed. This kind of irresponsible order from Union Minister makes the people laugh and surprises (sic)"



Imagemakers

Mohan Singh in turn found landlords who were looking for cheap labour and, according to the police, sold the labourers to them. Known contemptuously in Punjab as "bhaiyas", the impoverished Biharis were lured into Punjab by promises of well-paid jobs. But such jobs never materialised. Instead the "bhaiyas" were herded into farms and made to work from sunrise to sunset. They had no option but to be slaves now as they had no money to return home. Mohan Singh had been carrying on this trade for the past five years.

Nor is Mohan Singh's an isolated case: it is simply according to the police, the only case which was brought to their notice. But between the months of March and May, which is the harvesting season, there are thousands of such cases of slave trade at every level.

This is also the season when land-

Bihari slaves in Punjab

Said a "bhaiya" at Ludhiana station, "Babu,
ab aur nahin aana hai"

By SAUMITRA BANERJEE

SLAVES are still being bought and sold in India. Even as you are reading this, thousands of impoverished Biharis are working in the fields of Punjab, for rich Punjabi farmers, in total bondage. They are given just a bare minimum of food, and made to work from dawn to late in the night. These unfortunate people have been brought in herds from Bihar by contractors, and have been auctioned off in lots to whichever Punjabi farmer could bid highest for them. The bloodsucking contractor has taken the money and left these Biharis to their unfortunate fate.

On April 2, Mohan Singh and Narendra Singh of Urmur, Tanda, in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab, were formally arrested for trading in slaves. According to the Tanda police, last year, Mohan Singh, a schoolteacher, popularly known as Masterji, using his contacts brought over a number of Biharis and subsequently sold them to Narendra Singh, his relative and a prosperous landlord, to work in the fields in the harvesting season. Unfortunately for Mohan Singh, one of the people he had brought over was an educated boy who had been lured by the promise of a good job in Punjab. He managed to escape from Mohan

Singh's clutches, fled back home to Chaibasa, Bihar, and lodged an FIR with the police station there. Soon, a report was sent to the Station House Officer, Tanda, through the Superintendent of Police, Hoshiarpur and the two men, Narendra Singh and Mohan Singh, were arrested under sections 363, 370, 371, 372 and 373 IPC. The charges were that of slave trading. The two of them were produced before the magistrate in Hoshiarpur and were subsequently sent to Chaibasa, where a case was lodged against them.

Mohan Singh's modus operandi was simple. His associates in Bihar rounded up people looking for work and sent them over to him in Handa.

less labourers in Bihar and eastern UP find themselves without work and food. In contrast, in Punjab, before the rains set in by the end of June, the wheat has to be harvested, threshed, sold in the mandi or to the railway station and packed off to the Food Corporation of India. Once the rains set in the crops would rot and it would mean the waste of a season's labour. The entire process — from harvesting to packing the wheat on to trains—calls for the vast additional temporary employment. During the last ten years, local labour has been difficult to find. The growing wealth of the state has enabled those lower down the poverty line to make a trip to the labour-hungry markets in the Middle East. Local labour has not only become scarce, but much more expensive as well. As one young man of Hoshiarpur put it: "There is a lot of money in the Middle East and there is a lot of work available there as well. So it is best

to go there for some years and come back with a lot of money".

Industrialisation has also helped transfer labour from the farm to the better-paying, less arduous factory. Besides, the green revolution brought prosperity to the Punjabi farmer, and this new wealth encouraged a tendency among landholders to employ labour rather than work on the fields themselves. Mechanisation notwithstanding, there still remains a lot of work which has to be done manually. And the common thinking seems to be: if there is cheap labour available, why not make use of it?

"Jab magh ka mahina aata hai, tab aadmi bhookh se marne lagte hai (in the month of Magh — February-March — people start dying of hunger)," Chutkan, a "bhaiya" from Lakshmanpur of Gonda district of UP told us in Jullundur. And this hunger leads to the migration of labour to the Punjab in the last decade and more.

When the first labourers came over, they worked in the fields, were paid for their efforts and went back home after the harvesting season was over. But during the following years a different pattern developed. The landlords realised the plight of the labourers and decided to enslave them rather than hire them. They struck deals with contractors, who would be paid commissions. Once, the labourers arrived, the thikedar, or the middleman, took over. The thikedar told the labourers that since he had paid for their train fare, they would have to work for two months without salary, but they would be given two meals a day and a place to sleep. He would then proceed to contact landlords in need of labour and "sell" them to the landlord. The landlords would make them work on his fields without pay.

MOST of the labourers from Bihar come either by the Howrah Mail or the Tata Express and are usually from Darbhanga, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi districts. They arrive in groups of 30 or 40 and are dumped at Ludhiana station from where they are picked up. Those who arrive from UP come usually by trucks and are generally from Azamgarh and Mirzapur. About two or three thikedar get together, hire a couple of trucks and send them with their men to UP. The contacts are met, the trucks filled with labourers and brought over to Punjab. Ram Lakhani, a Bihari rickshawpuller at Rohtakpur, who had come to Punjab five years back and had started off as a labourer in a farm in Ludhiana described how they were sold in Punjab: "We are promised a lot of money by the thikedar who has contacts in Bihar and we are brought over here by train. We are put into one compartment or on the roofs of trains and we alight either in Khanna or in Ludhiana. We travel without tickets, as the thikedar has some arrangement with the ticket collector who is paid a commission. We are



then either sold off at the station itself or kept at the thikedar's house till some landlords are contacted. Sometimes, when we resist, we are beaten along the way. When we arrive we are so new that it is hardly possible for us to protest. I have been here for the last five years and I know the entire dhanda."

Once the labourers arrive, they realise that they have no means of escape and they don't have even the money to return home. Besides, even if they did return, how would they manage to scrape together two meals a day? Said Tapas Paswan

from Darbhanga, who we talked to at Jullundur railway station the day he had arrived: "We are waiting for the thikedar. We have been promised work and we have been told that we will be paid Rs nine a day. We have come such a long way because we don't have anything to eat. Here at least we will get two meals a day. We know we won't starve here. At home we were not so sure." That promise of Rs 9 a day is the lie that lures.

Every morning, with their tea a dash of opium is mixed, so that the slaves can work extra hard through-

Bihari children at Ludhiana. Child labour lives on



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out the day. Again, along with the men arrive women and children. The young children, even as young as ten years of age, are sent to the fields and have to work throughout the day. But the women do not always get work and there have been cases when they have taken to begging. Not only this, but when at the end of their stay the slaves who dare to ask for their wages are either told to get out or are told that money has already been paid to the thikedars and they would have to collect it from them which is impossible. Said a "bhaiya" at Ludhiana station, "Babu, ab aur nahin aana hai" (We will not come again). He had been brought by a thikedar who said that he would be paid Rs 100 every month for working. But when at the end of every month he asked for the money he was told that he would be paid the next month. Finally, when he finished his tenure, he was told to leave and not given any money.

But not all the labourers who come to Punjab during the harvesting season are bought by the landlords. There are a few who come on their own in search of work. But their working conditions are no better. The landlords take advantage of the fact that they have nowhere else to go and employ them at depressed wages. Sometimes when the "bhaiyas" arrive they remain at the station for a number of days without work and the landlords, who at this time of the year frequent the railway stations, do not employ them immediately. They wait for a number of days till the labourers are really desperate and then employ them at low or non-existent wages. They are either employed as daily wage labourers or on a contract basis for a period of three months.

Again, not all the labourers who come to Punjab want to return to their homes. It is estimated that about 10 lakh immigrant labourers come to Punjab every year and though most of them leave after harvesting is over, some settle down in Punjab and instead of working on the farms move on to the cities. They take up menial jobs, work on road construction sites, at brick kilns or as rickshawpullers. They have even started working in the various factories in Punjab. Though no survey has been carried out, it is estimated that the "bhaiyas" form about ten per cent of the population of Punjab. As a Punjabi government official put it: "They have become a part of the culture of Punjab. Soon you will find that they have permeated into every sphere of life here. So much so, that I would not be surprised if in another 15 years we have another Assam on our hands".

Most "bhaiyas" working in the factories live in small, crowded rooms. For example, just outside a thread factory in Hoshiarpur are the houses where the "bhaiyas" live. In rooms which are approximately seven feet by five feet live seven people who together pay as much as Rs 50 a month for the room. Their families are in their original villages, and



Immigrant labourers at the Ludhiana railway station

only when they manage to save up enough money do they go home. Said Gagandeo, who works at the thread factory, "Kya karen saab? Pet ke liye bahut kuch karna parta hai. (What to do? A hungry stomach forces us to do many things)".

The average Punjabi treats "bhaiyas" with condescension and contempt. One result of this superiority complex is that the Punjab police refuse to seriously prosecute slave trading. They look the other way. Mr Sube Singh, SSP, Ludhiana, said "Such things don't happen. We have not received any such complaint. It is only you people from the Press who think of such things." This is

surprising in view of the fact that Ludhiana station is the centre of the trading. The SP of Hoshiarpur, Mr S. R. Sharma, was more frank, though guarded: "It is not really slave trade that goes on. The Press has chosen to call it so. People are in need of work and there is a lot of work to be done in Punjab. But it is true that these people "bhaiyas" are exploited at every level. Like there was this case of a boy from UP who just could not carry on here but he did not have the money to return. So he came to me and I helped him out".

But there are slaves. It is only convenient for Punjab to pretend otherwise.

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THE WORLD

Silly Sam



Mrs Tito at Tito's funeral

President Tito's funeral might have been a solemn affair but it was also one in which there was a lot of diplomacy going on—especially where the two super powers are concerned. The Russian President scored one over the American President Jimmy Carter, and he seemed quite satisfied about it when he arrived for the late Marshal's funeral on May 7, 1980.

It all began when President Carter said that he would stay away from the funeral. It was assumed that the Russian President would not attend the funeral either. But the Russian President played his card at the right moment. On the evening of

May 5 Mr Brezhnev decided he had to attend the funeral in Belgrade. It was too late for Mr Carter to go back on his decision. The Yugoslavs do not much like the idea since Jimmy Carter has been assuring them of American economic and political support for an independent Yugoslavia. There is a growing fear that the Russians would take over Yugoslavia and Mr Carter's presence at the funeral would have set the tremors in Yugoslavian hearts. This despite the fact that President Carter sent his mother Mrs Lillian Carter and his Vice President Mr Mondale for the ceremony in Belgrade.

A clean protest

Recently a section of the Metro workers of Paris went on strike, causing the underground to wallow in rubbish. The major demands of the striking sweepers were higher pay and, believe it or not, access to the showers owned by the RATP Metro system. At first things looked bleak for the striking workers who were not directly employed, but merely subcontracted to the RATP by smaller firms and so did not have a right to the benefits enjoyed by the

regular workers. However, while on one hand public opinion went in favour of the strikers because of a suspicion of racial exploitation in the entire matter; on the other hand, the political overtones of the strike became clear. The RATP authorities began to act. At the end of the five week strike, the sweepers were promised not only a higher pay, but also an afterwork shower. One they will no doubt need once the underground has been swept clean

When 'disaster' struck Florida

The problem of illegal immigrants (the polite term for refugees) is now beginning to trouble the President of the United States. Haitians are making good use of a special presidential decree that allowed some 3,500 Cubans to enter the United States. The Haitians are acquiring ramshackle fishing boats and dinghies and rowing them almost to land at Florida under the very eyes of astonished bathers to join their 9,000 countrymen who had applied for asylum in 1972 and the 100,000 to 200,000

who had not all of whom are now living in the United States. While the President had said yes, immigration is saying no to these people, who are driven into the country because of economic difficulties according to some and because of political difficulties according to others. Whatever may be the ultimate decision taken by the President regarding the influx of these immigrants, at the moment, the Governor of Florida has declared Florida's two southern counties disaster areas.

The Tramp stands still



Charles Chaplin

Should a Tramp get a statue? Well, the members of the Westminster City Council's planning committee think so not unlike West Bengal's ministers. Small wonders then that they dismissed all objections — that ranged from the one that he had alleged Communist sympathies, voiced by some 47 Westminster Conservatives in a written petition to the planning committee, to another that held that he should not be elevated on the same plain as William Shakespeare — and passed the project almost unanimously to mark the 91st birth anniversary of Charlie Chaplin. It is hoped that this £8,500 project will be completed by early summer and so, if all goes well, Charlie would be safely in place at Leicester Square by that time.

Hothouse city

To have a domed city is the prayer of the residents of Winooski, a small town in Vermont who are asking for federal grants to enclose their town in a glass dome. The proponents argue the advantages of snow-free winters, and Florida winters for those who can ill afford to fly to the resort. Opponents talk of humidity and an

quality. The issue is, however, assumed important proportions which resulted in an international symposium in April 1980. Among others, Mr Bucknam argued that the matter could be expressed in terms of the preservation of the environment. He said that a domed city would be a form of environmental control.

LIVING

Getting a kick out of life

If the supporters of East Bengal football club were to form an independent principality, their king would surely be an Iranian—Majid Baksoor. This Iranian youth was the cynosure of all eyes at the Eden Gardens during the Federation Cup matches held in Calcutta between April 15 and May 3. Thousands of fans, irrespective of their club loyalties, cheered every move that Majid made on the machine. But it was in the hearts of East Bengal fans that he found a special place, reports S. N. M. Akbar.

Majid and another Iranian, Jamshed Nassiri, formed the backbone of the East Bengal side. This club was severely affected during the inter club transfers this year, as many of its star players switched over to Mohun Bagan. In spite of this mass defection, East Bengal could figure in the final and share the honours with Mohun Bagan, the

by N. Bhattacharya



The Iranian stars Majid, Jamshed and Khabbazi

credit goes to Jamshed and Majid. Between them they scored the maximum number of goals in the tournament and their presence made all the difference for East Bengal. Majid is a student of Aligarh Muslim University where he studies commerce but football has been his first love since childhood days. Among his admirers are a num-

ber of beautiful women but Majid is heart-whole and fancy free. What does he hate most in Calcutta? "I have come to this city to play football, not to have my legs broken", said Majid in an interview after East Bengal's match against Mohun Bagan. Calcuttans will see more of this ebullient striker during the League matches.

Designs to win

It's worth 500,000 dollars, the Agha Khan prize for Islamic Architecture, that is. It will be awarded to the five best projects, which will be adjudged by a nine-man interdisciplinary jury. One member of the technical team is Dr T. Stanish, professor of sociology at a Tunis University and an expert on Muslim architecture. His team is responsible for visiting countries from Morocco and Indonesia and was recently in Delhi. Dr Stanish told Saumitra Banerjee that he was very impressed with Delhi. "Though it is not a predominantly Muslim country, there is an abundance of Muslim architecture here," he said. "Architecture is a symbol of emotion and civilisation and I find that in the two cities I have visited in India (Delhi and Agra), there is a distinct identity.



Besides, there is no dependence on foreign countries and goods. That is excellent, for in order to modernise, we have to be ourselves. In Delhi I find that a lot of stress has been placed on housing, which is a very basic need of the people. I find that the Delhi Development Authority has done

a lot in this respect. In Agra I found that besides the Islamic architecture of the Moghul days, a lot of new structures, predominantly of Islamic style, have come up. This much I can say, my recommendation will be made in all earnest and I hope that India will be a recipient of this prize."

Exorcise in futility

An enterprising female exorcist in Madras decamped with jewels and cash worth Rs 50,000 but failed to escape the clutches of the city's police force. Before she could do the vanishing trick, she was behind bars, reports Arthur Pais. Rohini Krishnanda, a 42-year-old *sanyasini* had been invited to exorcise the "spirits" at the home of her son's professor. When she recommended month-long special pujas, her instructions were followed and no less than Rs 28,000 was spent in the process. On the final day of the puja, the *sanyasini*, suggested that the jewels be kept before the sacrificial fire. Her advice was adhered to, but it was discovered that the valuables had miraculously disappeared before the puja began. And what was more, the *sanyasini* had disappeared too. It now remains to be seen whether the *sanyasini* can con the police into believing that they too need her services to get rid of their devils.

Some lingo, by jingo

Now, what would you think if a Madras invited you to drink a cigarette and eat a coffee with him? Arthur Pais himself, a resident of Madras, reports that it is not at all uncommon.

There was a chief sub-editor on an English daily who nearly became apoplectic when a young trainee, who had spent most of his life in a small town near Madurai, asked politely whether he would be allowed to drink a cigarette within the office precincts. And, as if that was not enough, a couple of days later he explained that "saints" were, expected in his house. On enquiry it transpired that a couple of holy men were scheduled to perform a puja at his home.

The cult of King Bruce

Praveen Raghav



Just when it looked as if martial fever had died a natural death, the Dragon returned to India. Bruce Lee fans once again revelled in the heroics of the late star in the movie *Return of the Dragon* and tried to emulate his stunts outside the movie hall. And just to prove that Bombay is not far behind in the race, came a release entitled *Morchha* (Front). Only problem was, *Return of the Dragon* was already running to packed houses. In the realisation that they were up against stiff competition, to say

the least, the producers of *Morchha* have devised a series of fascinating posters. Their catchline runs thus: "Let's dance for the great guy Bruce Lee", and almost all their posters show an assortment of girls in postures more compromising than martial. The film is apparently being sold as a tribute to the late Bruce Lee, but it is another set of posters for the same movie that really takes the cake. It shows an athletic damsel with a *nanchaku*, while the film is billed as "confrontation of action with reaction".

Who Kauls the shots?

How does one react to Mani Kaul's cinematic ventures? The man who directed *Duvidha* and *Uski Roti* is being washed ashore by his new wave; he is in trouble again with the Films Division people. To begin with, they did not like the documentary on women which Kaul made for them. They felt that Kaul had portrayed women as an exploited class, not as the new, thrusting, adventurous lot. Now they say that the film is fine, in fact, quite wonderful for the serious student of cinema and the film society circuit, but they feel it is also too impressionistic and complex to be screened in cinema houses for average viewers.

According to Ashish Rajadhyaksha, the Films Division's decision has, as expected, invited fair criticism. "What's the

fellow supposed to do?" asked an angry Saeed Mirza (of *Arund Desai* fame). Should he include a cabaret in the middle of a film on migrants to Bombay to keep the audience interested? Will the FD (Films Division) at least try and begin to define the concept of entertainment in the middle of a serious film on a serious theme?" Kaul himself was enigmatic: "I don't know what I'll do. The last time it happened, they put in a shot of a woman jumping from a helicopter, meaning: see how smart and adventurous our women are! One may be, but is the FD trying to con audiences into believing that all the women in India are like that? I told the FD that if they touched an inch of *Women* (his documentary) they would have to remove my name from the credits, or I'd sue them. They removed my name."

No premier(e)

Among Morarji Desai's achievements is a film script on Lord Krishna; among his many setbacks was the producer's decision to drop the project. As a matter of fact, the producer has quit Bombay altogether. But the former Prime Minister is not the only one who has been affected by the producer "going walkabout". Ramanand Sagar, who was supposed to direct the film, has also been left in the lurch. The Bombay based one-time big-time director was actually planning to make a comeback with Morarji's script

Dham Vir Jaynar



Figuring out history



Quite by chance, a few labourers at Chandra Ketu Garh came across mysterious fragments of a moulded terracotta plaque. These remained with the West Bengal Directorate of Archaeology, within a steel almirah for months, without a name or proper identity. Mr Prakash Dasgupta, director of archaeology in Calcutta, thought that they were part of a puzzle with an important clue missing. Mr Dasgupta assigned the fragments to about 2 AD. He felt that the diaphanous drapery and the decorative "sash" designed with Roman letters on the plaque were influenced by the Romans and Scythians in the opening centuries of the Christian era. But Mr Dasgupta failed to understand the significance of the monkey which had an eager expres-

sion in its eyes. Its presence made identification doubly difficult, though Mr Dasgupta could not help feeling that he had seen yet another pair of similar eager and apish eyes somewhere, sometime. Those eyes held the clue to the mystery, adds Sudeshna Barua. Recently, another plaque was found. On it was a figure of Hanuman who appeared to be searching for the abducted Sita. It was Hanuman's eyes which made Mr Dasgupta check the earlier discovery and, in a flash, he realised that there was before him the earliest Ramayana motif, complete with the monkey in the Ashoka grove, the bejewelled Sita and, by her side, in a reverential pose, the lovely *rakshashi*, Sarama. The mystery was at last unraveled.

Democracy falters in Nepal

We will revise the Constitution, says B. P. Koirala

ALL hopes of the emergence of a multi-Party democracy in Nepal finally evaporated on May 13, when the counting of votes was completed. Eleven days earlier, the people of Nepal had participated in the first-ever referendum held in their country. The choice before them was between the panchayat system of government which has been in force since 1962 and multi-Party democracy. For some of the younger ones, it was a novel experience, since the inhabitants of this mountain kingdom have only been to the polls once before. That was in 1959 when the government they voted to power lasted only 18 months before it was upstaged by a royal coup.

There was a great deal of apprehension prior to May 2; a lot of speculation about whether there would be violence or not. Royal Nepal Airlines cancelled all internal flights scheduled for referendum day; Casino Nepal, the pride of the Oberoi Soaltee, was closed and a public holiday declared. But the undercurrent of tens on did not take long to evaporate. May 2 dawned cloudy and overcast but there were serpentine queues at the polling booths long before 9.15 a.m., at which time the booths opened. The ballot papers were unique, for in this case there were no symbols: they were divided into two sections, one yellow for the panchayat system, the other sky blue for the multi-party system.

A school in central Kathmandu had been converted for the day into a polling station and the adults lined up in separate queues for men and women. Outside, the youngsters watched the proceedings with interest, peeping through the railings while helmeted soldiers kept watch from a variety of vantage points. As it turned out, they were not wanted, for everything took place smoothly, without even a hint of trouble.

In the districts it was no different. The turnout, for a start, was amazing and by noon, when the sun began to shine through the heavy cloud bank the heat must have made the wait rather uncomfortable for the women and the older men. But they did not leave their places in the queues. Those who had umbrellas put them to good use, while those that did not, waited patiently for their turn to vote. All over Nepal, the atmosphere that day was unique. It was part

serious, part festive, but above all else there was a new feeling. For all those over 21, it was the feeling of being able to guide the destiny of their own country.

At about 3.30 p.m. there was a light drizzle and our driver stopped to check his windscreen wipers. Within ten minutes the drizzle had turned into a downpour and the voters left their places in the queues to take temporary shelter wherever they could. The drum-



B. P. Koirala

ming on the tin roofs became louder and more incessant until someone discovered that it was being caused by hailstones. A pleasant old man who shared our shelter—our doorway—asked me if we had hailstorms like this in India. When I informed him that we did, he whispered almost conspiratorially, "We haven't had hail for years. This is the gods' way of blessing Nepal on referendum day."

In late April this year, Nepal certainly seemed to have acquired all the trappings of democracy. The clearest manifestation of this was the graffiti that had begun to cover the walls of Kathmandu, something not known before. It was difficult to find a wall that was not adorned by slogans and murals. One of the more dramatic pieces of graffiti announced, "No panchayat, no Nepal", while others proclaimed "Partylessness is our way of thinking", or "Long live the panchayat leaders". There was a rash of posters all over and in some cases a multi-Party poster had been deliberately pasted over a panchayat poster, obscuring its exhortations.

On New Road, the shopping area of the capital, there appeared a new art form. At least it was new to the people of Nepal: the political cartoon. Everyday there was a new one pasted high on the wall opposite the tiny square where one buys the daily papers. Interestingly enough, about ten feet up the wall was a hand-lettered slogan which read "Multi-Party wall". The cartoons themselves were not very artistic although they did succeed in getting their message across. One businessman admitted that he deliberately took a detour on his way home from work so that he could inspect the day's addition.

Then there were the public meetings, any semblance of which had been banned for 19 long years. At Ratna Park, the scene of many a parade where the King had traditionally taken the salute, people gathered to listen to the promises of the would-be leaders. They came in droves, converging on the green in their thousands to listen to the politicians. On the outskirts stood the cynics who quailed with mirth every time a speaker made a dramatic claim or a promise they reckoned would never be honoured. But the fact remains that public meetings were drawing large audiences: for the people of Nepal, the words of the speakers were the words of freedom. There were impromptu gatherings too. Soapbox orators were in their element and needed no encouragement to rattle off speeches rife with noble rhetoric and high ideals. One such gathering took place shortly after one of the many public meetings, when dusk was falling and thousands had begun the long trek home. One young revolutionary took it upon himself to explain to his companions just what was wrong with their country. The crowd around him grew and they egged him on, enchanted by his fire and zeal. "The referendum is the only thing that will save Nepal," he thundered and began to single out people from his audience. "Can you save Nepal?" he asked them, repeating his question with fervour. More and more people were stopping to listen. "Can you save Nepal?" he repeated, pointing to a young man who was watching the proceedings with detached interest. "No, I can't," came the unexpected answer, "and neither will you if you remain here ranting".

THE controversial three-tier panchayat system was initiated by King Mahendra, father of the present ruler, in 1962. It was a crucial period in the political history of Nepal, a time when the King felt that the power which should have been his was actually slipping away from him. Hence his specification that the King retain the central power assisted by a national panchayat, or council of representatives. This system of government, claimed King Mahendra, was more in keeping with Nepalese traditions than a Western Parliamentary form of government. The first tier of the panchayat system consists of the village and town panchayats, whose members are elected on a popular basis. These in turn are represented in the district and zone panchayats, which are finally represented in the national panchayat, the highest tier. It was at this level that members used to be appointed by the King, leading to the charge that the panchayat system itself derived all initiative from the palace. However, on December 16 last year, the King conceded the question of adult franchise, thus ensuring a direct election to the national panchayat. It was a crucial step; a major concession whereby he divested himself of the legacy of absolute power. In the ultimate analysis this was a step that assured valuable votes for the panchayat camp.

The panchayat system had a massive advantage at the very outset, for they had more workers than the multi-Party camp, while their organisational base was considerably stronger. Besides, the King's grant of general amnesty came perilously late, thus eroding the chances of Koirala and his companions. Political prisoners or those in self-exile in India waited in vain for the King's

K. M. Kishor



announcement which eventually was made on April 13, a bare two weeks before the referendum. Had the announcement of amnesty been made earlier, the panchayat system would have received a severe setback as men like Bharat Shamsheer and Beni Bahadur Karki would then have been able to campaign in the hilly areas.

According to Bisheshwar Prasad (B.P.) Koirala, onetime Prime Minister and the leading figure in the Nepali Congress, the panchayat system killed all freedom of expression while its elections were reduced to a farce. "The panchayat system," he declared emphatically, "is concomitant with corruption, tyranny and unresponsive administration." A dedicated panchayat worker bristled when I confronted him with this charge. "This is a false claim, one that has been repeated several times in the last year in order to discredit us," he explained. "The people have never had any complaints about the panchayat system and indeed, if the King had not been at the helm of the country's affairs, there would have been all kinds of trouble. My people have been ruled by Kings for years. Take away the institution of monarchy and they will have no leadership to look to. They have been reared on the idea that monarchy is the only way to run Nepal and they will never forget that. Go out into the villages and see what the people have to say. You ask them what they think of the panchayat system and whether or not there is anything wrong with it."

When I put this question to a grizzled old villager on the outskirts of Kathmandu he was very

definite in his opinion. "The panchayat system has never harmed me and certainly I have tremendous respect for the King. I am an old man; I know nothing about the method of governing a country but I have no intentions of voting for the multi-Party system. After all, I have not complaints against the panchayat system, so why should I vote for something I know nothing about? I do not want any more than I already have. Besides, the present system of democracy is good enough for me."

Then there was a young taxi driver, clad in a T-shirt and Wrangler jeans who waxed eloquent when he discovered that I was an Indian journalist. "It is just another form of puppet government where the King calls the tune and all the others dance to it. I have never had much time for the panchayat system, but my father supports it wholeheartedly. He tells me that I do not know what is good for me. I tell him he is old and foolish."

One week before the referendum, B. P. Koirala had already completed his campaigning and was confident enough to say, "We will win hands down". When asked what he and other multi-Party leaders would do if the panchayat system won the referendum he thought for a while before he answered. "If we lose", he said, "we reserve the right to propagate the revision of the Constitution." He was more cautious when I asked him if a panchayat victory would mean the end of democracy for his country. "No", he replied, "because the democratic process itself can never be killed, for it is always evolving."

DAVID McMAHON, Kathmandu



Airhostess S. Dutta

Caught in a storm

Two minutes of sheer hell

"It was not an accident. It was an aircraft passing through a thunderstorm," said Mr P. Subramanyam, the public relations officer of the Indian Airlines in Calcutta. He was talking about the Bagdogra-Calcutta Indian Airlines flight 223, which encountered a severe thunderstorm over Rampurhat only 80 nautical miles away from Calcutta. It happened on Saturday, May 10, 1980. On board the Boeing 737 aircraft were 126 passengers and two infants. Just 15 flying minutes away from Calcutta, the plane entered a mass of thunderclouds. The pilot had as usual the meteorological report from Bagdogra and Calcutta before the plane took off from Bagdogra at 3.00 p.m. for the 55-minute flight. The commander, Captain N. V. Rajwade, took the first step of the Turbulence Penetration Procedure and pressed the 'Fasten your seat belts' sign button.

Father Neavett, a passenger, who had probably not noticed the sign prepared to go to the toilet. Then the storm struck. Before any of the people aboard could notice it the craft was shaking violently and dropped a hundred feet. Many who did not have the time to fasten their seat belts were thrown off their seats. Airhostess, S. Dutta found herself on her back. A mother found her child thrown out of her lap. Pieces of hand baggage were tossed around and a case containing currency notes flew open causing more of a bedlam in the confused atmosphere. Once again, the aircraft tossed violently. As a senior Indian Airlines pilot who has had similar experiences of nor'-westers said: "It's as if a giant fist is

holding the aircraft and giving it a good shaking."

The crisis that lasted for not more than two minutes was like a two-hour ordeal for the pilot and had some tragic consequences. Two members of the cabin crew were injured. Steward Raju sustained pelvic injuries while Miss S. Dutta, the airhostess, was in a state of shock and at the time of writing was still under sedation. Ten passengers who sustained minor injuries were treated at the airport medical centre and released soon after. "All the medical expenses," said Mr Subramanyam, "are being borne by Indian Airlines".

Two other passengers, Mr A. K. Dutta and A. Chatterjee, both working for the same hospital equipment supply concern and who had boarded the aircraft at the last moment, died. According to Mr Subramanyam, Mr Dutta had died before he was taken off the plane. Mr Chatterjee, however, died later in R. G. Kar Hospital. Post-mortems have been done but the findings are yet to be made public.

One wonders if this untoward incident could have been avoided. Officials are of the opinion that no matter how experienced a pilot may be, when thrown in a storm, there is little that a pilot can do. Further, the Calcutta-Bagdogra airroute at this time of the year experiences frequent vicious thunderstorms and the smallness in the number of similar incidents speaks rather highly of the efficiency of the pilots in manoeuvring the planes through the storms. Indeed, the safe landing on May 10, brought in showers of praise for Capt. Rajwade from the Calcutta Operations Manager, Capt. Williams. A departmental as well as a governmental enquiry has been instituted and questions regarding compensation for the families of the deceased have come up although the final decision is yet to be taken.

TIRTHANKAR GHOSH and
S URMILA MAJUMDAR, Calcutta

Is the Congress(I) already in?

The Rajasthan Governor is most obliging

SENIOR IAS and police officers considered close to the previous government in Rajasthan are being transferred to "punishment posts". Competence, talent and integrity obviously have nothing to do with these postings. What seems to guide Governor Raghukul Tilak is the anxiety to help boost the prospects of the Congress (I) at the hustings. He seems sure about the Congress (I) forming the government after the elections.

During President's rule no vital policy decision should be taken but Rajasthan seems to be having a de facto Congress (I) government already. First, all the urban improvement trusts formed by the Janata government were dissolved. All chairmen appointed by the former government to corporations were asked to quit. Those who did not comply were sacked. Among the victims is Rajmata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur who quit as chairman of the Rajasthan State Tourism Development Corporation. It is doubtful whether she will take any interest in the coming elections. With long memories of what happened during the Emergency, the Jaipur ruling house is, in fact, toying with the idea of having some links with Congress (I). Former Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat has criticised the large scale transfers of senior officers without keeping the state's interests in view. Shekhawat's secretary, M. L. Mehta, a senior IAS officer, has been sent to a very junior post in Ajmer.

Senior IAS officers are seen visiting the residence of the Congress (I) chief, Ramkishore Vyas, who has suddenly come into the limelight due to his closeness with Mrs Gandhi. Once Vyas was considered a spent force even in the Party. These days he is acting like the duly appointed Chief Minister. "He can get any officer transferred to any post," said a high government functionary.

Sanjay Gandhi was accorded an Emergency-type welcome when he visited Ajmer. Both the advisors to the Governor and the IG of police were present to receive Sanjay. In fact, the whole of the government was present to give a warm welcome. P. C. Sethi, who was accompanying Sanjay, was forgotten by everybody present at the helipad.

M P. JAIN, Jaipur

High Court

THE Haryana Civil Aviation Department wants to sever a claim, literally, with Mr. Narain. The former Union Minister. It is claimed, used a four-seater aircraft belonging to the state government and the bill came to a tidy Rs 60,000. Mr. Narain, however, refused to pay up, despite several reminders. Finally, apparently irritated at the reminders, Netaji made a public statement to the effect that he had never requested for the use of an aircraft and hence there was no question of footing the bill. The Aviation Department which permits VIPs to use its aircraft for private work on request and payment—has declared that it has documentary evidence that the request was made, in writing by Mr.

Mr. Narain. The department also claims that the case was referred to the State Government for attachment. Mr. Narain, however, even if he had few assets to attach, it may not be the case. Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, who was possibly the reason why he has already cleared a good part of his dues in instalments. Mr. Narain, a winner by experience, the aviation department has decided to collect a part of the hiring charges before permitting VIPs to use the aircraft for private work.

A CORRESPONDENT.
Chandigarh

Magistrate's term not renewed

Was the Left Front Government vindictive?

JUSTICE V. M. Tarkunde bared a perennial truth when he said: "In our Constitution, there are no safeguards against politically motivated appointments; a Government that does not believe in the independence of the judiciary is enabled to interfere". This remark, directed elsewhere, boomeranged on the West Bengal Government when, on March 17, 1980, the state's Judicial Minister, Hashim Abdul Halim, was accused by Abdus Sattar (Congress-I) in the state assembly of recruiting judicial officers and employees of a particular political hue and thereby attempting to paint the judicial system red. Sattar also alleged that two copyists (Ashoke Karmakar and Birendra Brahma) who had been working in the District Judge's Court, Murshidabad, and had been selected by the District Judge, could not be appointed because of the interventions of the local Co-ordination Committee, and subsequent cancellations of the appointments by the Judicial Department. Even in 1978, he said, about 30 lawyers had been selected by the High Court for appointment, but none of them had been appointed by the state Government as yet.

Halim refuted these charges by citing the instance of Ramen Roy who had been selected by the High Court for a post in the Higher Judicial Service, but had been ignored by the previous Congress Government in which Sattar served for five years. Roy had been appointed by the Left



Shiv Kumar Khanna

Government despite the fact that he had opposed a CPI(M) candidate in the last election as a Janata Party nominee.

This heated controversy crystallised soon after in the resignation of Shiv Kumar Khanna on March 22, 1980 as Special Judicial Magistrate, Sealdah Criminal Court, Calcutta. Khanna charged that he had been eased out of office as he had refused "to kowtow to the Left Government's policies", and that he was resigning

in protest against this "political victimisation". Khanna's resignation vide his letter to the Registrar, Appellate Side, Calcutta High Court, took effect from March 24 though his term was due to expire on March 31.

An honorary judicial magistrate is appointed by the High Court on the recommendation of the State Judicial Department, as per the 1974 amendment to Section 13 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The appointment is renewed every year, with intimation of renewal coming about three months in advance. This year Khanna learnt from the High Court that his recommendation had been withdrawn. Prior to 1974, the State Government could appoint directly, but the amendment vested in the High Court the absolute authority, though the state Government's recommendation would be required. However, Khanna clarified in an exclusive interview, that the recommendation once given holds good until withdrawn—this was the view of the High Court itself. "Therefore, a withdrawal of the recommendation meant that there was a special reason for it—and this amounted to an insult to my integrity and prestige". Khanna (61) added that he had four years still to go before retirement. During 29 years of honorary judicial service "based on sincerity, honesty and milk of human kindness", Khanna claimed that he never allowed any political consideration to influence his judicial decisions. This claim attains a wider perspective because Khanna has been self-avowedly a Congress member since 1947; he was Councillor, Corporation of Calcutta (1952-72, uninterrupted), and was elected Deputy Mayor (1969-71). Since 1969 he also holds the post of Chairman, Congress Municipal Association.

It is pertinent to note here that Khanna, who is also a registered advocate of the High Court, has a host of bustling businesses including Khanna & Sons (P) Ltd., Khanna Cold Storage, Khanna Petrol Pump, Khanna Cinema, Khanna Motor Training School, Peiping Chinese Restaurant, Khanna Higher Secondary School—apart from landed properties and Khanna Nagar, a colony in New Delhi. His son is a High Court advocate, the elder daughter (Dr Miss Urmila Khanna) runs Khanna Nursing Home, and his other daughter has a flourishing garments business in America. Describing himself as "a social worker", he admitted that there was "a saying in the market" that his roaring businesses had been blessed by his judicial job.

Khanna revealed that in order to remove him "indirectly", the state Government granted judicial sanction to one Mohammad Abdur Rauf to file a case against him for "a very petty affair" and which "did not constitute an offence", according to the High Court. While dealing with the case of Rauf, for assailing his mother, the accused was found to be violently disposed when his sister was being cross-examined. He was therefore put into the "cage" on April 27, 1978. Rauf's case was dismissed by Bima Kumar Mishra, Additional Chief Judi-

**"Are these
pillowcases
from
New Great?"**

No,
they're from
Zee Cee Em.
Now move over
and let me sleep!"



They're not the most all we make, but do try, you might get them here!

cial Magistrate, whereupon he filed an appeal in the High Court—which also dismissed it (Justice Manoj Kumar Mukherjee) on February 27, 1980. The High Court pointed out that this was "the first instance of its kind" when the state Government had granted a sanction to prosecute a magistrate—and Rauf was known to have leftist affiliations, too. He also cited the instance when, as Deputy Mayor, he had been assaulted by some leftists, resulting in a head injury. Once Rauf's case failed, he claimed, they used the provision of recommendation in the CrPC as "a last weapon"—and he was the only honorary judicial magistrate to be affected by the decision. His record of speedy work was also not taken into consideration, he added.

The number of cases pending in magistrate courts at the end of 1978 was 9,03,641 apart from another three lakhs in other courts. The pending cases in the entire Sardaah Criminal Court when Khanna resigned from there were 18,905, of which only 69 were in the court of Khanna. But the Judicial Department would not have him there, he said, "whether cases remain pending or litigants go to hell." The Bar Association and Law Clerks' Association of the court both gave a clean and complimentary chit to Khanna and pleaded for "an immediate and sympathetic consideration" in signed letters to the Chief Minister and the Judicial Minister, and sent a deputation to the Chief Justice of the High Court to stress their support in his favour. He therefore thought it "prudent and honourable" to resign as the Judicial Department was "by hook or by crook likely to have its way to see me out of the judicial chair".

Hashim Abdul Halim, Judicial Minister, West Bengal, met us exclusively and demolished Khanna's arguments crisply and efficiently. Khanna, he said, was not the only honorary magistrate to be affected; there were two others (Manoj Deb and B. C. Banerjee), one of them in fact being a CPI(M) supporter. Only a lady magistrate had been allowed to continue as she related to juvenile courts. To help handle pending cases, the government was shortly setting up over 100 new courts and appointing stipendiary magistrates. "We are a Government of the people," Halim said. "And if someone felt aggrieved, and wanted to file a case, he had every right to do so. The Advocate-General (S. K. Acharyya) felt that the case warranted a sanction as no Government officer could tamper with anyone's freedom. The Advocate-General is the most competent person to advise the Government and I proceeded along that advice. What the judgment of the High Court finally was is a different matter. The person who felt aggrieved had every right to proceed. Haven't we given permission to proceed against police personnel as well?"

ANIL GROVER, Calcutta

Kapil hooked



Guided Singh

Romi with Kapil Dev

KAPIL Dev, India's star cricket all-rounder, has finally got hooked. At a simple ceremony Kapil got engaged to Ramani Bhatia, daughter of a Bombay industrialist on May 7. The engagement came as a surprise to most people. Said a sportscribe who had met Kapil during the recent Ranji Trophy tournament at Roh-tak: "I talked to him for quite some time, but he did not mention his marriage. Besides, I had thought it was quite unlikely because his elder brother and sister are unmarried. It has come as a big surprise to all of us."

Ramani, nicknamed Romi, is a graduate from Elphinstone College, Bombay, and did her schooling from Loreto Convent, Tara Hall, in Simla. Was it going to be a love-marriage? "No," said K. R. Bhatia, Romi's father. "The engagement was, in fact, arranged by some common friends who felt that Romi and Kapil would make an ideal couple. The date of the marriage has not been fixed, but it would be sometime soon," said Mr Bhatia. The ceremony was held at Eagle's Nest Guest House,

Chandigarh, amidst an exclusive circle of close friends and relatives. As Kapil in his white shirt and blue corduroy jeans presented his 21-year-old fiancée, who was clad in pink salwar and kameez, with the ring, Mrs Bhatia, Romi's mother shed silent tears of joy. Kapil seemed happy, though somewhat nervous. When asked if he would get married before he left with the Indian team on the tour of Australia, Kapil replied: "It all depends on the situation." He added that his marriage would not affect his cricket and that he would carry on with it. And to a question about his fiancée: "I don't really know if she is from Delhi or Bombay. You see, my brother arranged everything," said Kapil. He is, however, very possessive about his fiancée and told some reporters who wanted to talk to Romi: "I would not like it." But talk they did, and all that Romi had to tell them was: "I am looking for moral support from him (Kapil)."

SAUMITRA BANERJEE,
Chandigarh

It was high-calibre action, from start to finish. From the kickoff on the opening day, April 18, to the Mohun Bagan-East Bengal final on May 8, there were thrills and spills aplenty. The fierce heat melted the tar on some of Calcutta's roads but it did not prevent 80,000 spectators from filling the Eden Gardens on every day of the tournament to see their gladiator heroes in action on the hallowed turf.

Not only was the tournament a success in terms of the game, it was also an outstanding triumph for the IFA (Indian Football Association). In fact, this was the first Federation Cup tournament which brought in substantial profits for both the IFA and AIFF (All-India Football Federation). Strategy and tactics played a great part in this success and the IFA adopted the same measures they had used during the Calcutta Nationals in 1977-78. The tickets distributed were mostly season tickets, as a result of which the IFA had enough money in its coffers even before the tournament had begun.

For football lovers in the city of Calcutta—and they are legion—it was a heaven-sent opportunity. To

Star football ends in star wars

P. K. BANERJEE reports on the Federation Cup tournament in Calcutta

see the three top teams of Bengal pit their talents against the cream of football talent from the rest of the country was something they have longed for. Over the last 10 or 12 years the IFA shield matches have failed, for some reason or the other, to attract teams from other parts of India, but this year, the Federation Cup made up for the past failures. Thus it was not surprising that so many thousands of fans braved the heat of a scorching



Nikhil Bhattacharya

summer to watch the tournament.

A full throated roar (and a full-throated roar from 80,000 fans has to be heard to be believed) greeted the players as they trotted out into the sunlight on the opening day. Premier Tyres, a Kerala team played Bombay's Orkay Mills in the first match. Premier Tyres emerged victorious in the encounter, scoring four goals against the Bombay outfit, which looked unusually subdued in thought and

David Williams of Mohammedan Sporting scores against Orkay Mills



Nikhil Bhattacharya



Majid Bakshar of East Bengal in action

action as well. But it was the second match of the day that really stole the thunder, when the star-studded local team, Mohammedan Sporting, took on the popular Goan team, Vasco. It was the former team that draw first blood—to the delight of the capacity crowd—through the efforts of an Indian international, Surojit Sengupta. But the unexpected was yet to come. Vasco continued to fight back and equalised through Jose Fernandes, with the result that Vasco completely dominated the entire second half of the game. They took the lead with a second goal scored by Dabare. Supporters of the home team began leaving the ground in disgust, many of them voicing their doubts about how strong the revamped team really was. But the Calcutta XI were determined to have the last word and sure enough, they salvaged their prestige with a last-ditch effort by another Indian international, Shabir Ali who scored in the dying minutes of the encounter.

At this stage of the tournament, a lot of theories were floated about the performance and capabilities of the home teams, not all of them complimentary. The general feeling was that they were being over-estimated and would all be eliminated at some stage in the tournament. Some critics went so far as to suggest that the Cup would go to an outstation team, while adding that it would only be the visiting sides that would cover themselves with glory. But all these so-called pundits forgot to consider one very important point. The outside teams arrived in the city after already having played in several tournaments, so they were playing at peak form. The Calcutta teams, however, were just about starting their own season and so had not even succeeded in dusting

the cobwebs off their boots. Being short of match practice, they all needed some time to come to grips with their own game but eventually, gained form and confidence with each outing. Statistics will show that every Calcutta team improved steadily after its first match to demolish opponents without much effort.

At the same time, one must admit the outstation teams did not have it all their way. For a start they had to play in unusually trying conditions—two out of three group matches in 100 degrees plus Fahrenheit temperatures. Add to that, the fact that matches started at two in the afternoon on a pitch that was baked hard, and you have a full picture of their problems. The justification put forward by the IFA, after a vehement protest by the outstation teams, did not even succeed in convincing people like us who have been associated with this sport at the highest level for the last 25 or 30 years. Calcutta teams could easily have been asked to play at least one of their three group matches at 2 p.m., and I, for one, am sure that they would not have objected to the proposal.

The outstanding North, West and South teams exhibited good ball control and team work, but they all succumbed to the age-old weakness of shooting in front of the goal mouth. Particularly against the Calcutta teams they looked incapable of turning the tide in their favour when their opponents were in full cry. One cannot blame them as they were trying their best under the circumstances. To play against Delhi or Bombay teams on their respective home grounds is bad enough; to play against a Calcutta team in Calcutta before thousands of its supporters is perhaps the most demoralising way to play football.

Mohammedan Sporting proceeded to their rightful place in the semi final without really having to exert themselves. First they slammed in four goals against Premier Tyres and also against Orkay Mills. Following their first match against Mohammedan Sporting, Vasco drew with Orkay, who seemed to be playing well below form. Ultimately they went down tamely by three goals to nil in their encounter with Premier Tyres, while the latter took second place in their group with a tally of four points.

Punjab Police, last year's Durand finalists, created a sensation when they scored no less than seven goals in a row against Titanium (Kerala) in their first outing. They then defeated SESA, a Goa team (a last minute entry after last year's holders, Punjab BSF withdrew). However, SESA produced a better brand of football against the Police side than they had displayed against Tatas. In the Group III deciding match between Punjab Police and Tatas, the stage seemed set for a thrilling photo finish. Ultimately, though, it ended in a goalless draw, thus enabling the Police team to qualify for the semi final by virtue of a better goal average than their opponents.

JCT, another popular team from Punjab, took on ITI—the Bangalore side which won the inaugural Federation Cup—in what proved ultimately to be a most absorbing encounter. Although it ended in a 1-1 draw, spectators were enthralled by the two distinctly different styles of play. ITI, playing with crisp short passes and interchanging positions smoothly, were countered by the direct style adopted by the Punjab side which used long kicks to the best possible use. The same evening—April 25—Mohun Bagan made their first appearance in the tournament. This team, the

Beautiful ways to beat the heat

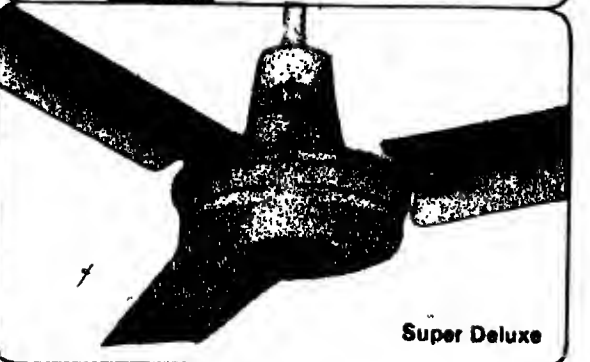
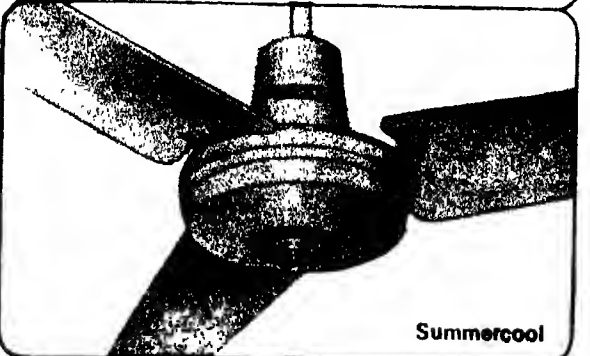
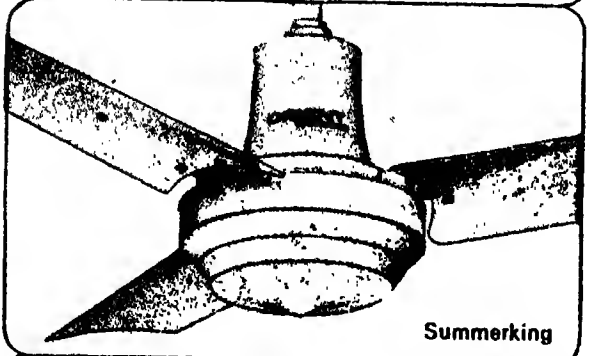
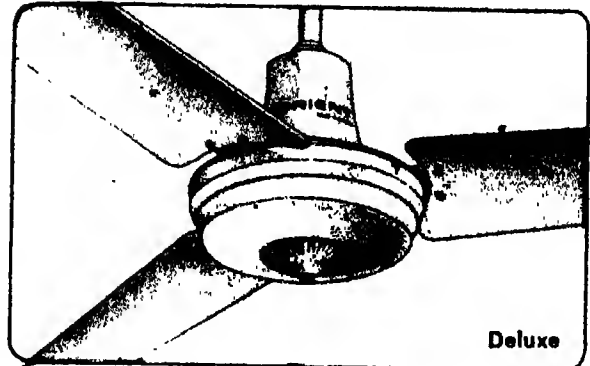
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most successful outfit in the country over the last four years, winning most of the trophies it competed for, instantly proved that it was as sensational as ever. Even before the crowd had settled down in the huge stadium Mohun Bagan had got into stride, opening its tally off the very first move. Salgaonkar centred, but Bidesh Bose, Mohun Bagan's powerful left-winger, followed close on the heels of the Salgaonkar midfielder. The latter had all the time in the world to pass to any of his team mates but instead he tried to dribble past the Mohun Bagan winger. His flitting movement almost succeeded but as he tried to get past, the ball ricocheted off Bidesh's body, coming directly in front of him. Before the Salgaonkar defence had time to reorganise, the Mohun Bagan man had gone through them like the proverbial knife through butter. He passed with the outside of the right foot to Mohun Bagan's recruit from Goa, Francis D'Souza, who was in the penalty box. The latter beat the goalkeeper hands down from 12 yards out, leaving Brahmanand confused and perplexed at the swiftness of the move.

In the Group I league matches, the encounter between the two most organised teams, Dempo and Mafatlal, produced a feast of football for the capacity crowd. Both teams played attacking football at high speed, producing some brilliant moves which had the spectators enthralled. Towards half time Dempo seemed to be in the driver's seat with a 3-1 lead but Mafatlal retaliated with a vengeance and produced two goals in the last 10 minutes. It was vintage football, to say the least. The next match saw East Bengal—who lost nine of their 11 regulars in the transfers—pitted against the HAL side from Bangalore. In spite of HAL's good ball play, the Calcutta side went ahead through their Iranian recruit Jamshed, a student at Aligarh. By the second half, HAL had recovered from their lapses. A misunderstanding between defender Monoranjan Bhattacharya and the goalie Nasir Ahmed gave Sunder Raj of HAL a chance on a platter and the ball went sailing into the East Bengal net. Ultimately, as if stung by this reverse in fortunes, East Bengal fought back relentlessly and got their reward when their other Iranian recruit, Majid Bakshar scored after eluding a defender, thus saving two points for his team in their opening encounter. East Bengal was a much improved side against Mafatlal, runners up in the last Federation Cup, and won comfortably by a two goal margin.

Ultimately, the tournament took a predictable pattern when three of the four teams in the semi-finals were from Calcutta. The first semi-final, when Mohun Bagan faced Mohammedan Sporting, was abandoned nine minutes before time



(L to R) Gautam Sarkar, Mohun Bagan, Debashish Roy and Amalraj of Mohammedan Sporting and Francis D'Souza of Mohun Bagan

because of bad light. The ex-East Bengal players who now swelled the ranks of the latter team clearly made a vast difference, as was evident when they controlled the game throughout. The replayed first leg semi final saw the same pattern of play emerge though Mohammedan Sporting first lost Prasanta Banerjee and then his replacement Samarendra Chowdhury, both of whom were injured. To make matters worse, their goalkeeper Bhaskar was also injured and had to be carried off the field on a stretcher. At one time the Mohammedan Sporting side was playing with just nine men, David Williams also out of the fray with a muscle injury.

The match suddenly burst into life when a clearance by a Mohun Bagan defender came to Akbar, who chested it and then volleyed a brilliant shot to beat the Mohun Bagan custodian. It was this goal that stung Mohun Bagan into action and just 30 seconds before the final whistle Gautam Sarkar scored the equaliser from a spot kick just outside the penalty box so another day ended with both teams sharing the honours. The next encounter was a different story altogether. Mohun Bagan played like champions, displaying magnificent all-round skill to dominate every department of the game. Mihir Bose scored first from 25 yards out with a gem of a shot that evaded Bhaskar Ganguly. The wingers were properly used for the first time and they made menacing moves towards the goalmouth. It was due to the efforts of Mohidul Islam, Ramen Bhattacharjee, Amalraj and Debashish that the score was kept down, Mohammedan Sporting fielded Prem Dorji, the Sikkimese deep defender but he too flopped and left the ground after sustaining an injury. The Nigerian boy David

Williams who was also a mere passenger, left the field limping and was substituted by Denis Williamson. Mohun Bagan slackened slightly in the second half but the never-say-die Mohammedan Sporting team had other ideas. A mis-heading by a Mohun Bagan defender saw Shabir getting the ball and passing it to Akbar. The latter snatched the opportunity, leaving the Mohun Bagan goalie helpless. As the match was drawing to a close, Arun Ghose, the Mohun Bagan coach, substituted the goalkeeper, bringing in Sivaji Banerjee instead. His tactics paid off when in the tie-breaker Sivaji proved by saving two penalties that his coach had assessed the situation correctly. Thus Mohun Bagan emerged triumphant, edging out their rivals by 6 goals to 4.

The final itself was an anti-climax, with the match between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal being abandoned with the scores tied at 1-1. Extra time could not be played out due to bad light, but that was not the only disappointment for the eager crowd. There were others factors too. First and foremost, the players squabbled among themselves and argued with the referee, leading to a very unpleasant atmosphere both on and off the field. In fact, policemen posted around the stadium had to resort to four lathi charges to control unruly sections of the crowd. It seemed as if the restlessness of the players had communicated itself—as always—to the fans as well. Thus it was in the ultimate result that the game of football came out a loser. It was a sorry sight when we witnessed police escorting the referees and linesmen off the field in the final of what held promise of being the greatest sporting contest witnessed at the Eden Gardens in many years.

THE carpenter from Punjab had gone to the inhospitable British Isles, traders from Gujarat spread their wares in Uganda, nurses from Kerala ministered in hospitals the world over. And then in the early Seventies began the Gulf rush. It was the same primordial trail, of the foraging human in search of things that would make life a little less harsh for him.

In the Gulf there were about 600,000 of my countrymen, who had gone there following the elemental scent of prosperity. But now, said the newspapers, the trail was being disrupted. Thousands of Indians had been rounded up and were awaiting deportation. The same primordial rejection, perhaps, by the native of the forager, I told myself.

I landed full of unpleasant anticipation. Questions loomed large: what would be the fate of those uprooted people? Six lakh people unwanted and deported, or humiliated and kept back posed a human problem of staggering dimensions. Quite a few of them had migrated

by selling everything they had at home to pay all travel expenses including cuts to job racketeers. If forced to leave their Gulf jobs, they would have to return to stark ruin. Rehabilitation would be a problem. There were questions too. For instance, there were already reports that construction in Kerala paid for in "petro-rupees" was grinding to a halt as remittances dwindled. What would happen to the changing landscape in Kerala? What would happen to the Overseas Employment and Export Corporation which was formed when the Gulf boom started? What would happen to the innumerable traders of human beings both in India and the Gulf countries?

But while touring these countries for three weeks, meeting immigrants from various walks of life and officials of various Governments I soon began to realise that I had unnecessarily burdened my mind with too many deep apprehensions. I returned with the feeling that we had overreacted to the exaggerated initial reports. Indeed, those reports were excessively sensationalised. It took a little looking beneath the surface for me to realize that the Gulf was not treating its Indian handymen too badly. In the first place, there was no particular ethnic dislike for the Indians. Nor was there any kind of economic jealousy, which is encountered in Britain. The tightening of labour and immigrant laws not only

in Kuwait and UAE but also in the rest of the Gulf countries, on more dispassionate examination, proved to be legitimate administrative measures designed to restore the flux to some kind of order. Thousands of immigrant workers could ill-afford to float or function in the anarchy of poorly defined categories. The new measures sought to bring the workers of all nationalities under greater scrutiny so that some restraints could be imposed on clandestine immigrants and job racketeering. In a sense, the legitimate Indian worker might even benefit from this clearing up of his environment.

"False reports would not cause any harm to existing relations between India and UAE, and the current administrative measures are meant to ensure stability for the benefit of everybody", said the UAE Minister of Labour Mr Saif Ali Jarwan. The Minister reiterated that the UAE labour intake would be based on "actual market requirements and no surplus would be permitted". Later, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Federation of the UAE Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Dr Bassam Darkazally told me that they would continue to require Indians as Indians are "better suited emotionally". This lays at rest, at least reasonably so, the scare that Indians may not be preferred in future.

For the first three months since

INDIA and the GULF

Sand at the end of the rainbow



T.K. MADHAVAN KUTTY visited the countries in the Gulf, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman recently, to report on how the pot of gold is getting empty at least for Indians.

January when the UAE authorities began cracking down on illegal immigrants and implementing their laws, it is worthwhile to note that over 800 employment visas were issued to Indians. This constituted about 60 per cent of the total visas issued to foreign nationals, according to Indian Embassy sources. This would indicate that, despite the control and regulation of the inflow of foreign workers, Indians are still not being discriminated against. Indians deported so far from the UAE do not exceed 2000, out of a total estimated Indian population of 2,50,000 in the UAE alone.

According to one Indian source, those who arrive even now with work permits outnumber people who are being sent away. In Kuwait, where the authorities claim to have more than 17,000 illegal residents, less than 200 have been deported so far, though initially there was some indiscriminate rounding-up.

All the same, there are objective economic factors at work. Thus, independent of any possible prejudice or resentment, employment opportunities in the Gulf are gradually diminishing. Their own boom, for their own reasons, is subsiding. The socio-political need for increased "Arabisation" is being emphasised, and the competition from other manpower-rich Asian countries like the Philippines, South Korea and lately from China is severe. This apart, the Western countries faced with the problem of unemployment, are rather sore with the Asians for having so large a share in the labour market of the fast-developing Gulf countries.

ANOTHER important aspect is that the Gulf countries themselves are turning out a certain number of educated people. The first batch of students from the UAE University will be graduating this year. These educated and qualified locals perforce have to replace, progressively, the immigrant workers, though this will be a rather longdrawn process. Besides, in the coming years these countries will lay emphasis on producing more skilled hands among the local people.

None can object to Arabisation, certainly not India. However, there are limits to Arabisation, at least in the immediate as well as the not so immediate future. In early March this year the executives and managers of both private and public organisations in the Gulf countries met to decide on an employment policy for the future. They came out with various suggestions regarding increased Arabisation and replacement of foreign nationals by qualified Arabs. While such policy exercises may continue to increase in coming years, albeit principally as policy exercises one can be confident that a certain balance will be kept between the "son of the soil" Arab and the "other Arab". For instance, an Egyptian Arab in Kuwait or an immigrant Zambian Arab in Oman. To keep a balance these



Indians waiting for their visas to be renewed

countries will also retain a good number of other non-Arab immigrants there for quite some time.

It is also true that of late South Koreans and the Filipinos have come in large numbers and they are getting a good number of contracts. They have established a good reputation as disciplined workers. This discipline has probably something to do with the political system of those countries. Though these workers enjoy a good reputation in the matter of completing a job entrusted to them on schedule, unlike the workers from the sub-continent, the presence of a large body of these 'disciplined' workers may not be welcome in the long run. Apart from their westernised 'culture' which is being looked upon suspiciously, there are already reports of these people being used as mercenaries. Their discipline and toughness make them suitable for the job, unlike the temperamentally disorganised and individualistic Indian immigrant. In other words, in the event of any trouble, immigrants from the sub-continent may be less of a security risk than others. This factor has to be borne in mind by us, and we should try to execute the work contracts given to us in such a way that an opportunity is not given to compare them unfavourably with the workers from the above mentioned countries.

China is trying to penetrate the labour market in these countries now dominated by the other Asian countries. But the Chinese work force still does not constitute an appreciable threat in the Gulf region and China has no diplomatic relations with many countries in this area. Moreover, the Gulf countries are aware that although China wants to earn hard currency, the Chinese workers are also sent to gain experi-

ence in advanced building and engineering techniques which China herself needs for her own modernisation programme.

While India, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and now China concentrate on the Gulf area to export their labour, it is the western countries who might present a more potent threat. Their soaring unemployment situation and the accompanying problems have made them think of ways to capture the market, which they can do now only by replacing or joining hands with Asian contractors and labour. The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) magazine of February, 1980 observed: "With or without joint ventures, however, it now seems inevitable that the influence of Asian contractors in the Middle East will go from strength to strength—and on the basis of sheer value-for-money deservedly so. Perhaps the western companies will take to heart the truth of that other old adage: 'If you can't beat them—join them.'"

But the efforts of the western countries will be first to try to replace the Asian immigrants. There are reports that recently the representatives of some of the western countries met and prepared a working paper setting forth the benefits for Gulf countries if western skilled labour, though a bit more expensive, is inducted. The document was circulated among the authorities and entrepreneurs in the Gulf region. It is possible that their invisible hands are responsible for the current campaign that a large number of Asian immigrants are a security risk in these countries. We should examine whether these western countries are behind the stories of ill-treatment meted out to Indians and Asian immigrants with a view to creating a rift between our country and the

countries in the Gulf. It is necessary to study the entire situation before reacting to the developments in the Gulf countries. As the UAE Minister said, nothing should be done to strain our relations. We should also see that we do not fall prey to calculated propaganda.

Not that such an appraisal would lead to the conclusion that the "exportable labour surplus" can look on endlessly Gulfward, or those washing themselves ashore on phoney papers can bank on the benign indifference of the hosts as they had done in the past. These countries are becoming increasingly aware of the illegal and unauthorised presence of foreign nationals and are determined to take steps. It is here that we need to respond to it without sentiment or emotion. The action is not directed against Indians as such. Among the deportees were men of many nationalities: others from our sub-continent, like Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, and fellow Arabs like Egyptians.

The Gulf countries may act in concert while evolving their labour policies, but while dealing with immigrant and unwanted labour, each country may adopt its own independent policies. When the crack-down on illegal immigrants started, the Kuwaiti Labour Ministry spokesman said: "The campaign is not guided by, nor has it anything to do

with, any similar move by some other countries in the region".

What is being done now by the UAE and Kuwait and what is proposed by Qatar in the near future is to regulate the inflow of workers and weed out the illegal entrants and residents. Earlier such steps were taken by Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf countries. Some countries in the region were careful from the beginning about the import of 'muscle' from other countries. On the other hand, the UAE, which embarked on large scale development and construction activity on the petro-dollar boom, was not strict, thus causing an unmanageable mob to pour in. The unscrupulous visa traders stowed away doctors on carpenters' work permits. Typists came as technicians, and nurses as public health advisors.

The problem of Indian immigrants is not always the same. It differs in the UAE from what it is in Kuwait or Qatar. There are differences too in composition of the Indian nationals themselves. While there are more Indians engaged in white-collar jobs in Bahrain, there are many construction workers in the UAE. In Kuwait they are ayahs and cooks and so on. As the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Mr S. J. S. Chatwal,

put it: the problem in the UAE is that of the illegal immigrant while in Kuwait it is that of the illegal resident. Innumerable stories of changing sponsors are heard from everywhere. These countries, whose capacity to import labour is increasingly diminishing, but will last at least for some years steadily, want to drastically discourage this system of switching from immigrant to resident.

Such measures by the UAE, early this year, caused concern and evoked sharp reaction. They had merely cracked down on illegal categories. However, it is worth noting that the concerned immigrants have been given amnesty up to June 21, 1980, to regularise their credentials. In Qatar too, new laws are under way. A person who has changed his sponsor has to go out of the country and can return only after three years. Hitherto, the time limit was six months. There are other restrictions also. In Kuwait, there are those whose contracts have expired and who have changed their sponsors. In the coming months more will be heard from other Gulf countries, like Qatar, about tightening of laws and we should be prepared to understand such measures and deal with the resultant inconveniences.

At the end of the amnesty period,

both in Kuwait and the UAE, a few thousands of people may be deported if their efforts to regularise their jobs do not meet with success. Such possible deportation would be the hard cases, and any possible overreaction at our end will affect our own long term interests.

There were reports of indiscriminate arrests and police harassment of Indians from Kuwait. There were also reports that a large number of Indians have been rounded up and put in jail. In UAE I happened to visit a lock-up. There were 14 Indians there. The authorities said there were not even one hundred Indians in their jails. "Some cases came to our notice and we helped them to get back to India", said Mr M. John, President of the Indian Association in Dubai. "In all cases", he said, "we got in touch with the authorities and our consulate who were extremely helpful. We are doing our best to see that the deportees' hardship is minimised, and all those who could be regularised are being helped to stay". When I mentioned this to a young Keralite, he protested: "Sir, I was in jail. The food was bad and we were put along with so many others in a small room". I asked him what his crime was. He said, "Nothing. I came here two years ago at the instance of my brother-in-law. He told me to go to Sharjah where someone would meet me with the job documents. I came to Sharjah. Someone collected my passport and I was taken to a distant place and from next morning I was put along with the other construction workers". He was an accountant in Bombay. I asked him why he did not try to check whether a proper job was waiting for him on arrival which he should have done as an educated person. There was no answer. One cannot blame the UAE authorities for what happened to him. Now, however, he is working as an accountant and his visa is being regularised. I met another person who on reaching Dubai sent his brother to fetch his passport, a case of bizarre ignorance.

One of the reasons for the crack-down on Indian immigrants, according to many people I met during the tour, is the role of the Engineering Projects (India) Ltd (EPIL). EPIL which has bagged some construction contracts in the Middle East contributed to a large extent, according to these reports, to the creation of labour problems and later immigrant problems. For example, from one of their projects in Kuwait, the employees started absconding because of inedible food, bad living conditions and exploitation by the Indian masters. Once they started absconding EPIL advertised in papers that these persons should not be given jobs by others and that they were 'wanted'.

EPIL projects in the Gulf

Kuwait US \$ 400 million

- Air Station Housing Project
- SAR Service Camp Project
- SAR Police Project
- Kuwait International Airport
- Bus Station Towers for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia US \$3500 million

- Electrification Scheme, West Area
- Oil Storage Tanks, Jubail

U.A.E. US \$2500 million

- Civil Works for Nuclear Reactor and Canal

Indians in the Gulf

Country	Population	Indians	Keralites among Indians
Kuwait	6,00,000	80,000	40,000 to 45,000
Bahrain	3,45,000	40,000	20,000
Saudi Arabia	7,912,000	80,000	35,000 to 40,000
Qatar	2,50,000	25,000	20,000 to 25,000
UAE	6,77,340	2,50,000	1,20,000
Oman	7,72,500	80,000	35,000

* Figures relating to Indians and Keralites among them are based on various estimates.

Indian workers at an EPIL project in Kuwait



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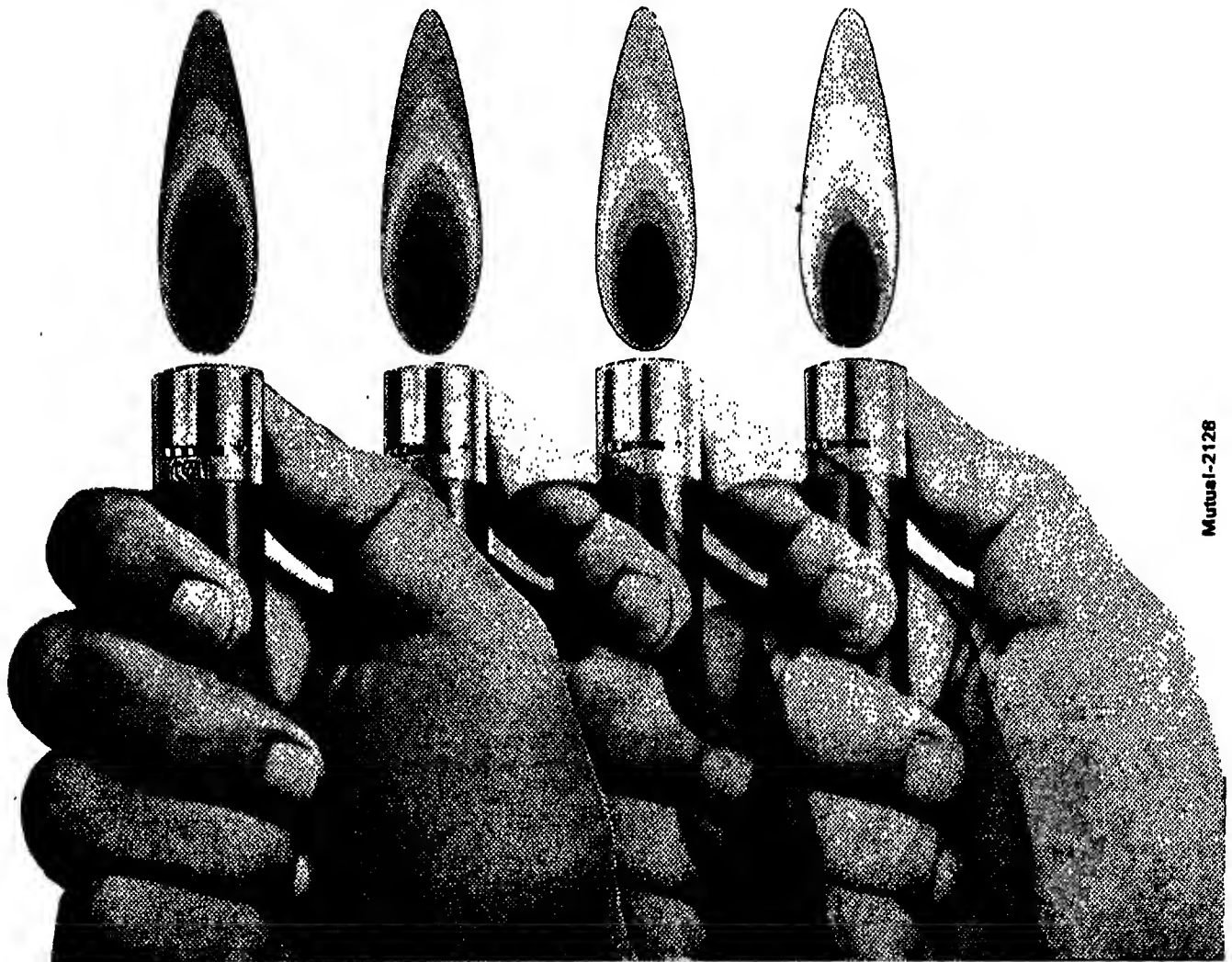
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men. This, it is said, led to a police crackdown on Indians. While some of the EPIL contracts have been executed well, there are also complaints about nepotism, exploitation and corruption and huge losses in some other cases. Bagging the tenders alone is not enough. It is also important that they are executed without bringing down the country's reputation. EPIL, in this regard, stands out in contrast to, say, the South Koreans or Filipinos who steal a march over us although they too bring their own cheap labour.

On arrival in the Gulf, the Asian worker often suffers from culture shock. The new world looks and feels different. Suddenly, he is put up in tents and deprived of his familiar freedoms. While some countries allow cultural organisations, some do not. Labour unions are unthinkable. An Indian without a favourite pastime of his own would naturally feel stifled. While some have adjusted themselves, there are many who have not. Workers from regimented societies like the South Koreans and the Filipinos, thrive in such conditions of strait-jacketing.

In Kuwait the domestics gather in front of their prestigious market place on every holiday. Many things go on at these gatherings including trafficking in women. Even

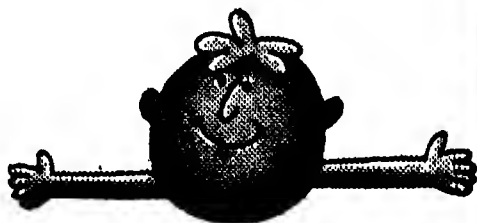
the 'sacred' local Arab also gets involved. This apart, there are reports of increased thefts, cheating and so on. There are frequent reports in local papers of illicit liquor hideouts being raided. Some enterprising Keralites once tried to print and market the local currency. Such activities coupled with their reluctance to adjust to local conditions and customs have compelled the authorities to deal more firmly with immigrants. The Indian immigrant persists in calling the local currency, rupee. He thinks it is a waste of time if the local employee takes time off for his prayers. People often wonder why Indian labour and social laws are not implemented in these countries! "It is the law and order problem the authorities are trying to control. There is over-emphasis on the security risk aspect. But once the unemployment problem is rooted out for which the present measures are aimed, Asians, particularly Indians, have nothing to worry", said a senior UAE authority.

However, the Indian immigrant today legitimately feels that reports about him in India now and in the past have not done him justice. The widely publicised flow of Gulf money and exaggerated stories of prosperity were certainly not to the liking of these developing countries.

Similarly, he feels that while reacting to the Arabs' recent steps in implementing their own labour laws, some people tend to overlook that they are countries which cherish their continued friendship with India. Besides, earlier, knowingly or otherwise, there was an impression that India was dependent on these countries for dealing with surplus labour. There was a certain vulgarity in this attitude. The Indian today went to the Gulf as his mother country had nothing to offer him and not like the earlier immigrant to Malaya or America who had gone out to better his lot. Efforts at mobilising the Gulf remittances for development, forming manpower export corporations needs to be done with a correct amount of sensibility.

The Thai Government had recently opened offices in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other countries to protect its workers' rights and look into their employment conditions and take care of contract abuses by both Arabs and their own men. There are reports that the Thai Government is also sponsoring crash courses for their workers on how to conduct themselves in these countries. It is time we started thinking on these lines. For, our stakes in the Gulf are greater, and will continue to be so for many years to come. ■

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GULMARG

REFRIGERATORS

KHAAS BAAT

AS A sequel to her award for the best actress, Jaya Bhaduri wants to stage a comeback. That she has isn't anybody denies. But marriage has made her a housewife. Or is it that she has purposely chosen to sit humble pie before her enormously successful superstar-husband? Any

way, the fact is that her friends are now hinting at her possible return to screen in a "film or two". If she decides to stay at home, she might turn out to be another Madame Nargis.

WHAT's this new feeling some superstars have about big-time producers?

Either superstars are growing wary about the latter, or being persuaded that the big-time producers should make way for the smaller ones in the industry. But curiously, what's happening is that men like Basu Chatterji, Jagmohan Mundhra and Shyam Benegal are being chased by superstars, while the smaller, would-be stars continue to pursue the Desais, Chopras and Mehras. Funny, isn't it?

Shabana Azmi

THE longest affair going on in Bombay nimeem recently has, very unexpectedly, come to an end. Unexpectedly, because everyone thought Shabana Azmi and Shekhar Kapur were so ideally made for each other that come what rumour or new involvement, they would one day head for marriage. It was like an unspoken agreement—even her parents treated Shekhar like their *damaad*! Now, suddenly, they refuse to face each other. They have set one another free, so to speak. And what's more, it's no gimmick this time. There is not a hint of another man in Shabana's life, neither is there a sign of any improvement in Shekhar's professional prospects. But they've surely split—and stories go that it is a temporary, voluntary split. If they feel they can't do without each other, they will come back together again.

MY, MY! Look who's on the scene after glamour-roles and gorgeous sets? Smriti Patil. She is signing films with big names, like Prakash Mehra, Sippy, Raj Khosla, Akbar Khan (a role rejected by Raakhee) and a chunk of her films has her starring opposite the 'one-man industry' Amitabh Bachchan. If she can capture the Jaya image and click with Amitabh, they'll go for a hot-sell proposition. Do I hear rumbles of insecurity and fear among the top-heroine bracket? If Smriti is on a winner-take-all rampage, then other girls better watch out.

LONG ago in her Sanjay Khan days—and now it really seems a long time back (at the rate things are progressing with Zeenat and her career, she must have left all that far behind!) there was this little game Sanjay would play of trying to make Zeenat jealous by playing up to Mumtaz at parties whenever Mumtaz was in town. It would upset Zeenat enough for all to see. Even Mumtaz could sense Sanjay using her to pull someone else's leg. Now there are rumours that he is going to take Mumtaz in a film, promoting her to the status of a celebrity. Clearly, he hasn't got rid of his fancy for Zeenat, if he's doing it just to bug her. And if the threat that he is going to take a willing Mumtaz who is trying to return to films, turns out to be true.



KHAAS BAAT

IT was one of those typical rape scenes being shot in a Malayalam film, and as hero Pratap was about to pull open heroine Surekha's saree, her father got panicky and screamed "Pratap, Pratap, don't lift the saree". Our young hero snapped back: "Mr Rao, your daughter cannot always play the Virgin Mary". Surekha's maiden role was that of Mary in a Telugu film but in her second film *Thakara* she exposed her anatomy as if she was from a freaky nudist colony. But soon after the release of *Thakara* her father seems to have become wiser. The film *Aarahanam* turned out to be a mild success, unlike *Thakara*. Surekha seems to have moved in to I. V. Sasi's camp now but surely continues to be Sasi's favourite.

FOLLOWING Shoba's tragic death, much is being made of Balu Mahendra's "sinful" living with her. But in Madras, every third person, be it a writer or an industrialist or a film magnate, has had an "extra" affair. That writers like Akilam and Jayakanthan have paramours is too well known a fact. And an industrialist like Velayudhan who's living with actress K. R. Vijaya is just another example. Gemini Ganesan in spite of having a wife at home carried on an affair with Pushpavalli (Rekha's mother) and had a long-standing love affair with actress Savithri. Near T. Naagar lives a Christian lady who claims to be Sivaji's paramour. In fact, she has even named her house after the Thespian and Jayalalitha's name continues to be linked with Shoban Babu, a Telugu star. Certainly, Balu is not the first person to go for a young mistress. So why pass a moral judgment on him as if he's the original sinner?

JAYABHARATHY'S nymphomaniac role in *Chandra Simham* didn't click. The film was heavily edited by the producers who were worried about getting an 'A' certificate (which they got eventually). The film was "inspired" by Harold Robbins's *Where Love Has Gone*.

THOUGH actress Radhika has announced a home production she's going slow with it. The box-office scene in Madras seems to be dull. For quite some



Srividya

time practically everybody is going around with a thick frown. The only star who's guaranteeing a sufficient box-office return is Rajnikant whose popularity reminds one of MGR in the Sixties. Rajnikant who was presented by some of the irresponsible Madras journalists as an incorrigible lunatic has not only survived and flourished but has also shown ample proof of fine behaviour. When he called on Balu Mahendra to console him on Shoba's death he blurted: "She was mad to have ended her life. But have courage. We need you. And you owe it to her not to perfect your creativity."



Rajnikant

FILM fans in Madras can really be fanatical. When MGR was thrown out from the DMK some eight years ago, a guy from Coimbatore used to torture himself since he couldn't bear to see MGR's "humiliation". And following Shoba's death an 18-year-old fan hanged himself with a saree. Another young man used to turn up at her house, fully sozzled, prostrate before her portrait and swear to 'finish off' the person responsible for her death.

PADMARAJA the prolific writer whose books have been made into soft-porno films has just completed a black comedy. This is going to be his second directorial venture. The film is about a wrestler whose idea of consummating a marriage is to bash up and box his wife.

BHARATAN'S Malayalam project with *Padmini* Kapila in the lead has been dropped. Instead he has completed two films: *Lorry* and *Chamaram*, starring Pratap Pothen. Zarina Wahab is the heroine of the latter film.

PIOUSJI

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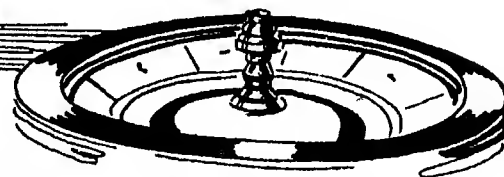
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without comment



KANPUR: Eager to see his name in print and the fanfare that a candidate to the Assembly elections enjoys, a villager made his mother sell her ornaments to pay for the security deposit at the point of knife, here. Bhagwati Prasad, 35 a resident of Goraya village in Chaubepur circle, threatened to stab his mother to death if she did not part with her silver ornaments and pay for his deposit. Scared, the old woman accompanied her son to the court where they sought the help of a lawyer in filing the nomination papers. When the lawyer asked for the security money and his own fees, the mother offered her ornaments. Subsequently, the jewellery was sold at the local Sarafa Market for Rs 300. In the meantime, the lawyer who understood the situation, to save the old woman her money, took Bhagwati to the court where he confided the whole episode to the magistrate. The magistrate told Bhagwati that as he was a Scheduled Caste, he needed certificate from the village sarpanch to that effect before he could file the papers. The "defected" Bhagwati returned to his village with the money only to be told that he had sold his mother's ornaments "damn cheap"—*Indian Express* (S. Mukhopadhyaya, Solan).

JHANSI: Mr Om Prakash Dikshit, a man-about-town known as Bade Guru jumped into a well here yesterday (May 3) after failing to raise Rs 250, according to the police. He needed the

money to furnish the security deposit to make a fourth try at becoming a legislator. Bade Guru was rescued by the timely action of people nearby, but the police registered a case of an attempt to commit suicide against him. The bachelor politician has fought Assembly elections thrice before as an independent. Bade Guru, apparently given to yogic moods, has been seen standing still and erect in the busy Jawahar Chowk here for four hours every evening—*Times of India* (Rita Jha, Bombay)

WANI: Of late Alka Chandragiriwar has been an object of curiosity and marvel for the people in Wani and the surrounding villages. The girl, only seven years old and having no acquaintance with English can type any printed document in English with accuracy and speed. Many have seen her typing 200 words correctly in eight minutes, when her performance was demonstrated at a function that formed a part of the activities of International Children Year 1979-80. The girl is the daughter of Shri M. J. Chandragiriwar who runs a government-recognised typewriting institute. She is studying in the second standard at the Marathi primary branch of Vivekanand High School, Wani. Just by watching the students learn typing in the institute, the child achieved so much proficiency in the English typewriting with rhythmic touch method. The child is always at the top in her class scoring more than 95 per cent marks in a subject like mathematics.—*Nagpur Times* (B. G. Chourasia, Nagpur).

LUCKNOW: Mr Bholanath Pandey and Mr Devendra Pandey, who allegedly skyjacked an Indian Airlines Boeing plane on a scheduled flight from Lucknow to Delhi in December 1978, are among the 425 Congress (I) candidates for the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. While Mr Bholanath Pandey is the Party nominee for Doaba seat in Ballia district, Mr Devendra Pandey has been nominated for the Jaisinghpur seat in Sultanpur district. The case of plane skyjacking is presently pending in a Lucknow court and the two accused are on bail—*Sunday Standard* (Chandra Manoharan, Ootacamund)

HE (Ashok Mitra, West Bengal Finance Minister) was our man: since when did he become a Communist?—The Union Energy Minister A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury

I DID not meet General Zia. I did not even see him from a distance anywhere—Mrs Gandhi at a Press conference on her return from Belgrade.

KAMAL NATH is so powerful that if he does not want, I cannot continue in power for a day—P. C. Sethi, Union Minister for Work and Housing, at a public meeting in Chindwara. Quoted in *Indian Express*

THE Indian legal system is very good. In fact, it is much better than the American or French systems. The Indian laws are in favour of the accused—Charles Shobraj interviewed in *Surya*

THOSE who are not loyal to Sanjay (Gandhi) cannot claim loyalty to Indira—Sanjay Singh, UP Youth Congress(I) chief

THE Central Government spoke the language of the gun, curfew and other repressive measures (against the Assam agitation)—J. P. Mathur, Bharatiya Janata Party leader

I WAS shocked to find players fighting among themselves. It was their action that triggered off the trouble in the stands. I understand that the players are paid hand some amounts. I do not grudge them that but then they should play and not engage themselves in rowdism — Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal on the Federation Cup football

AT every important stage of our national development, our Party (the CPI) has failed to understand the character of the national bourgeoisie—S. A. Dange

THE Congress(U) was only waiting for the rebels from the Congress (I), the Lok Dal and Janata(S)... They are only getting the rejects—Abbas Ali, president of UP State Janata Party

I ACCEPTED this job not to be second in foreign policy but to be first...I am going to relish it not because it is going to be fun but because it is going to be stimulating—Edward Muskie, the new US Secretary of State at his swearing-in ceremony

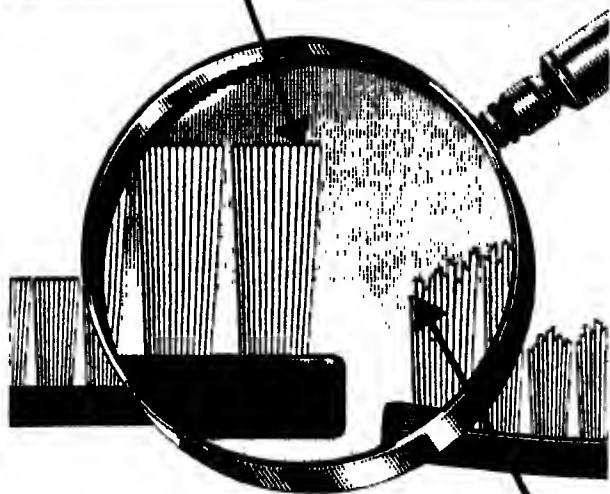
CHILDBIRTH remains one of the most grotesque and transcendental of all natural functions, matched perhaps only by its necessary preliminary—*Time*

ndia abroad

DURBAN: Thirtyfour Indian primary and high schoolchildren appeared in a court near here yesterday (May 5) on charges of public violence and trespassing. The charges were made in connexion with the nationwide schools boycott in protest against "racist"

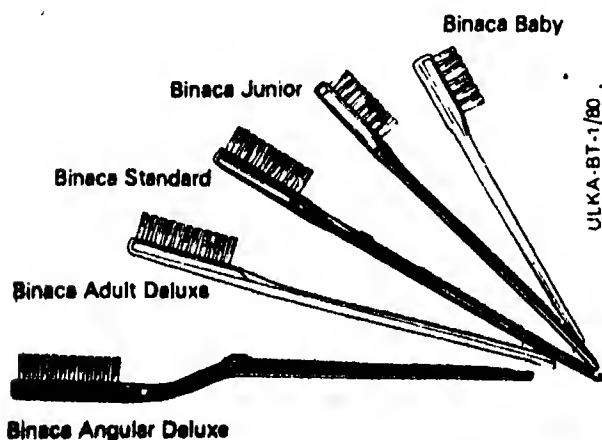
education. The boycott was begun in Cape province four weeks ago by "coloured" and Indian secondary schoolchildren throughout the country. Earlier in the day the Prime Minister Mr Pieter Botha told the children to return to their classes *Statesman*

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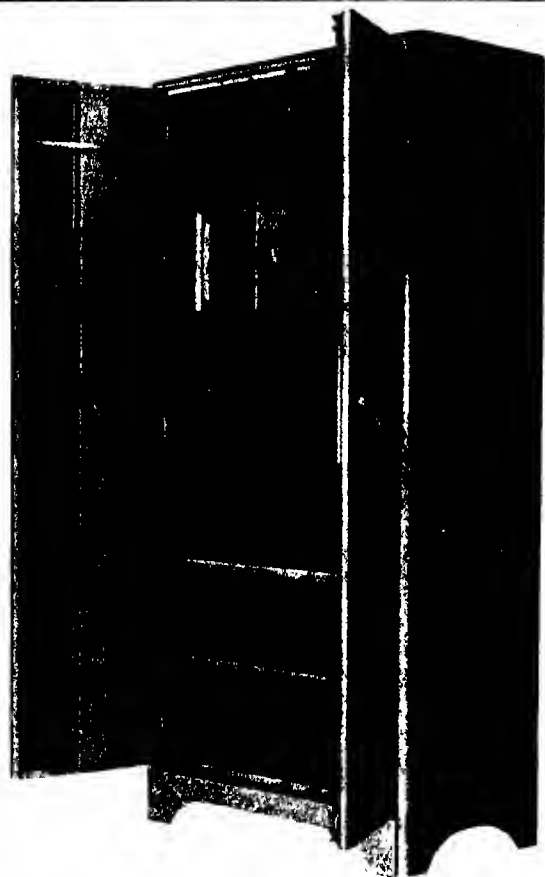


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ULKA-GBS-4/9

Beginning May 25

This week the Sun and Mercury are in Taurus, Venus alone is in Gemini, and Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu and Mars are conjoined in Leo. Uranus and Neptune are in Scorpio, and Kethu alone is in Aquarius. The Moon will be moving through Libra and Scorpio from Virgo.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) This week prepare yourself for disappointment in business and social activities.

Defer all kinds of changes. Safeguard your health and that of younger members of your family. Do not take needless risks. Accidents and quarrels are likely. However, you might have some good fortune. Conserve your resources. Expenditure on medicine is foreseen in the family. **Good dates:** 28, 29 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3, 9 and 11. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) Guard yourself against extravagance and imposition. Do not act on impulse. You

will come by good fortune provided you take the right decision and avoid quarrels. You will benefit unexpectedly perhaps through inheritance. A happy week for children and young colleagues. Your family life will be free from strains. Wait for important letters. **Good dates:** 26, 28, 29 and 30. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 9 and 11. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) The fortune has a mixed bag for you. You may be faced with an unexpected

illness. Be careful about the health of your family folk, especially the women. Later your fortunes will improve considerably. You are advised to keep a close watch on expenditures and matrimonial affairs in the family. This week is favourable for lawsuits and scientific ventures. A good time for travel. **Good dates:** 25, 27 and 30. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 4. **Favourable direction:** West.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Your affairs make good progress despite some anxiety and annoyance. Trans-

late plans into actions despite the opposition from an elderly person. Safeguard your health and that of your family. This week is unfavourable for the elderly members of the family. Do not make any change during this week. Avoid travel, courtship and love. Domestic and social activities will keep you busy. **Good dates:** 27, 28 and 30. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 9 and 11. **Favourable directions:** South and East.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) This week begins on a joyful note. New and pleasant relationships, courtship and

perhaps auspicious occasions are indicated this week. Health will improve. Happiness is foreseen. Your own industry and initiative will enhance the good fortune in store for you. Womenfolk will come forward to help. But they may hinder progress and provoke quarrels. Be cautious at the weekend. **Good dates:** 25, 26 and 30. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 2. **Favourable direction:** West.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) Good and bad fortunes are both predicted this week. This week calls

for caution in all things. Avoid impulsive actions and decisions. Defer changes, courtship and marriage. In the middle of the week prosperity is predicted on the financial front. Be discreet in speech, correspondence and action. Keep away from gambling and speculative ventures. **Good dates:** 27, 29 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 9 and 11. **Favourable direction:** East.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) Not a good time for love, marriage, domestic and business matters.

Serious quarrels involving litigation are foreseen. But a modicum of success and happiness is predicted. Hard work and initiative are required. Help from elders and employers are likely. Take initiative to the utmost in all your affairs. Look after your health and that of your family. **Good dates:** 25, 27 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 8 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) Do not neglect your business for pleasure. Conserve your resources.

Do not get involved in lawsuits. Womenfolk may cause some anxiety. But help from men is likely. Friends may come in the way of success. Health may not be very robust. Act upon your own intuitions and forge ahead. You may have to undertake an important journey. **Good dates:** 28, 30 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 9, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) This week your life proceeds normally without a hitch. A modicum

of good fortune and happiness is foreseen. You may face sharp disagreement — probably from someone in your profession or business. Elders will aid you. Refrain from hasty decisions and actions. Postpone changes. Keep watch over money matters and health. **Good dates:** 27, 29 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 4. **Favourable direction:** South-east.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) Devote time to your profession. Peruse correspondence carefully.

Avoid contradiction and also questionable romance. Do not spoil your good fortune by impulsive decisions and actions. This week is unfavourable for speculation, courtship and love affairs. Material success is predicted at the weekend. Do not be afraid to undertake new business ventures. **Good dates:** 29 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Financial benefits in unexpected ways are foreseen. You will have to

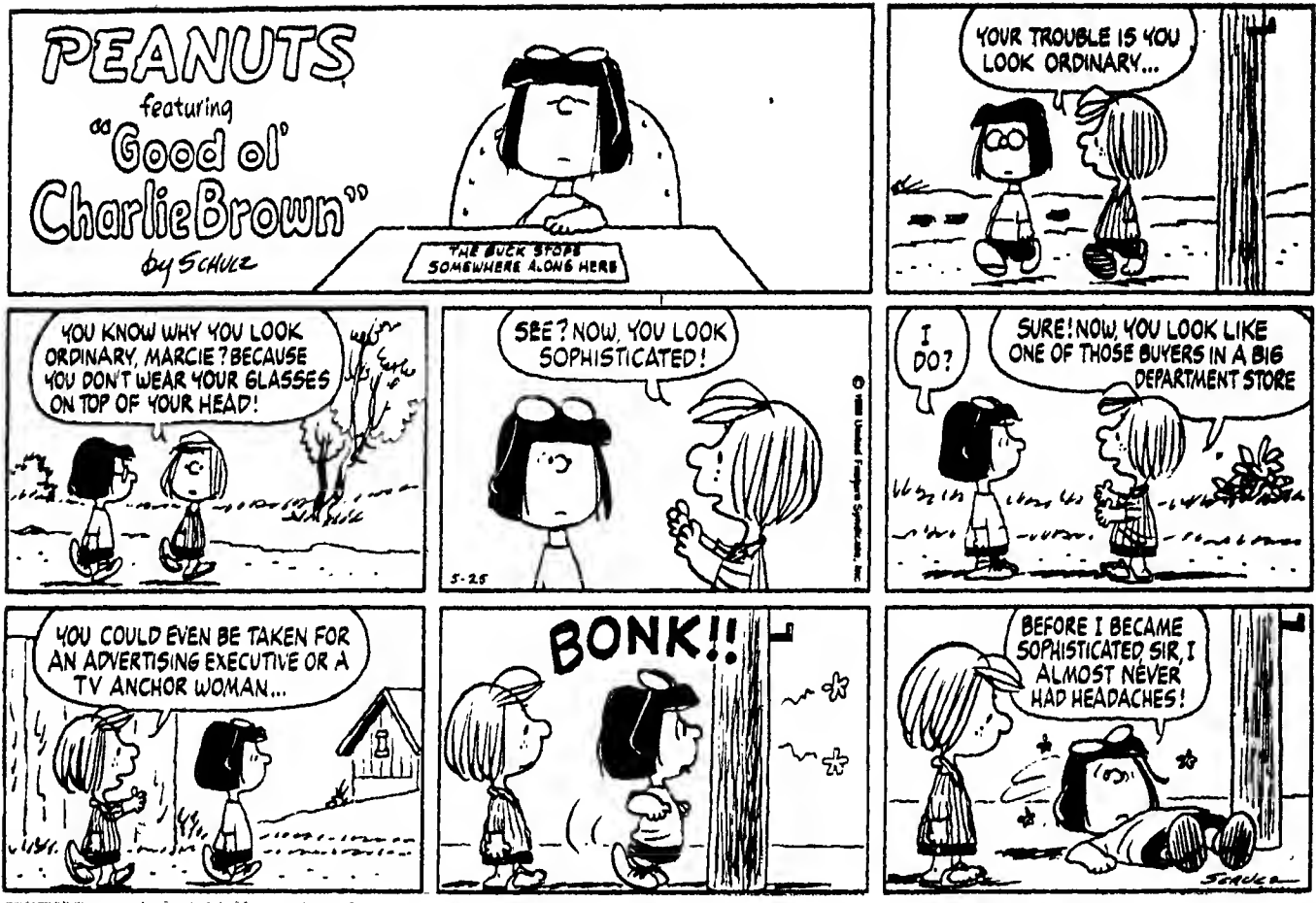
go on a journey. Make all kinds of changes. A happy and successful week is envisaged. Intellectual or artistic activities and valuable new friendships are predicted. Auspicious expenditures are shown in the family. Wait for important letters. Check all extravagant tendencies and keep your temper under control. **Good dates:** 23, 25, and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 11. **Favourable directions:** East and South.



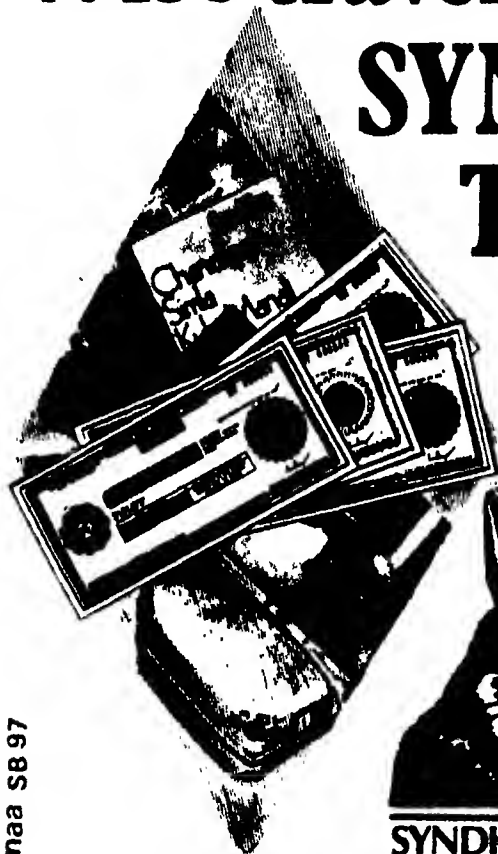
PISCES (February 20 — March 20) Your ruling planet Jupiter is in sixth house. This may

create a lot of problems. Be content to mark time and wait for the better days. Conserve your resources. Do not get involved in disputes. Eschew speculation and restrain extravagant tendencies. Avoid overstrain and litigation. **Good dates:** 27, 29 and 31. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 6 and 3. **Favourable direction:** West.

M B RAMAN



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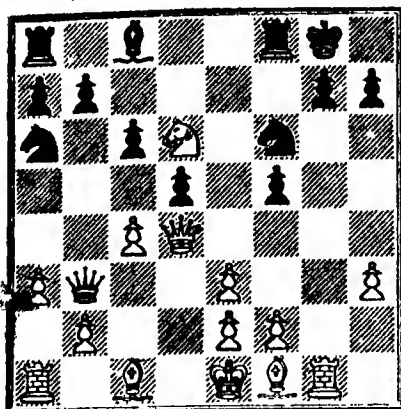
Nothing could be more vexing, more irritating, than losing cash while on a holiday or a business trip.

Carry Syndicate Bank Travellers cheques. That's the safest. Should you, by any chance, lose the cheques, nothing is lost. Your cash is safe.

No one but you can encash the cheques unless you order payment to an individual or institution.

chess

Thiele (Black)



Dubinin (White) to move
Position after Black's 15th move

Twelve champions

AS we are coming into the season of peace on earth, goodwill to all men and chess books for your friends, here are one or two possible additions to your Christmas shopping basket.

I like **Learn Chess from the World Champions** (Pergamon Press £3 50, hardback £7 50), by D. N. Levy. This very interesting and unusual book basically consists of a collection of articles, one by each of the 12 holders of the World Championship title, plus one by each of the five 'unofficial' world champions from the period before the title officially existed. Subject matter varies from an extensive analysis of Philidor's Defence by Philidor himself to a fascinating article on the art of analysis by Tal. Of interest both from an instructive and an historical viewpoint.

A collection of games, **The Games of the World Correspondence Chess Championships I-VII** by T. D. Harding (Batsford £9 50) is self-explanatory from its title. More than 700 games, many of which have never been published before. Should keep a noisy youngster quiet for hours. (If not you can always hit him over the head with it.)

For an all round look at the game it is still difficult to better Harry Golombek's **Encyclopedia of Chess** (Batsford £10). A treasure-house of history and information. It would be appreciated by any chess-lover, regardless of ability or experience.

For an elementary book, **Chess Openings for You**, by Bernard Cafferty (Batsford, £5 50, paperback £3 25) gives a very sensible and well thought out guide to opening play. It should appeal to a wide range of players, from near-beginners to relatively experienced club players.

Below is one of the many unusual and entertaining correspondence games from T. D. Harding's book. The notes are mine.

White: Dubinin. Black: Thiele.
The 7th World Correspondence Championship 1972-76
English Opening

1. P-QB4, N-KB3; 2. N-QB3, P-K4; 3. P-KN3, P-QB3; One of Black's most aggressive moves against the English, but risky.
4. N-B3, P-K5; 5. N-Q4, Q-N3; 6. N-B2, B-B4; 7. N-K3, B-xN; 8. O-P, B, Q-N5; 9. Q-Q4, Q-O; 10. P-QR3, Q-N6; 11. P-N4! A move one can only

really play in correspondence chess. 11. N-xP, N-xN, 12. Q-xN, P-Q4 would give Black counterplay.

11. ... N-xP; 12. R-KN1, P-KB4; 13. N-xKP! P-Q4; 14. N-Q6, N-QR3; the position is not at first sight very clear, but White's next two moves transform the situation dramatically.

15. P-R3, N-B3' (DIAGRAM) 16. P-K4!! Black seemed to have this square covered, but on any capture 17. B-R6 is crushing. 16. ... Q-N3; 17. Q-K5, B-PxP; 18. R-xP+! 18. B-R6, Q-xP!+ 19. K-xQ, N-N5! is not so clear.

18. ... K-R1 Or 18. K-xR, 19. Q-K7; K-N1, 20. B-R6.
19. R-KB7! Resigns, on account of 19. R-xR, 20. N-xR+; K-N2, 21. B-N5, K-xN 22. Q-xN+; K-N1, 23. B-R6.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

THOSE dire words, 'Your problem is wrong because ...' are the bane of every bridge correspondent's life, no matter that you were not setting a problem, but just describing an incident as it happened at the table, adding what you hoped were instructive comments. This deal indicates some of the pitfalls of analysis.

Dealer, North. N-S vulnerable.

♠ A 5 4 3	♥ J 6	♦ 10 6 5 2	♣ J 6 4
♠ K J 2	♥ A 5 4 3	♦ A 9	♣ 9 8 7 2
♠ N	♥ W	♦ E	♣ S
♠ Q 10 9 8 7	♥ K 7	♦ K Q 8 3	♣ A K
♠ 6 3	♥ Q 10 9 8 2	♦ J 7 4	♣ 10 5 3

In the American trials for the world championship, a play-off between two teams, Goldman sitting South, played in Four Spades after Hamman, West, had doubled the opening One Spade.

As his partner had bid hearts in response to the double, West made the ill-starred opening of ♥ A, followed by a heart to the declarer's King. At trick three South led a sneaky 7 of spades, which held the trick. Then he was able to cash the top clubs, lead a spade to the Ace, and discard two diamonds on ♠ Q J.

To heat the contract, after his opening lead, commented the *Bridge World*, West must insert the Jack of spades. This would have been good play, certainly, though by no means easy.

The comment about the Jack of spades was sensible and instructive, but not absolutely accurate. It wasn't long before some one wrote in to say, 'If West plays the Jack of spades, declarer must duck.' True, came the reply, but a defender who is good enough to cover the sneaky 7 with the Jack will immediately lead the King of spades, if the Jack is allowed to hold. Ah, but South should play off the Ace and King of clubs before leading ♠ 7. It is easier for West to cover then, but when declarer ducks, leading the King doesn't help, because West must follow to ♠ Q J.

Careful! If the play goes like this, West when in with ♠ J, doesn't play the King of spades. He exits with a club, and when in with Ace of diamonds on the next trick he leads a fourth club, killing the discard.

So it looks as though the defence should prevail. Unless, of course, declarer makes the double-dummy play of leading ♠ 10 from dummy.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Fishing as a pastime provides the theme of a new series of Australian stamps. Trout fingerlings (5 to 7 cm long) were first imported into Australia in 1864 and several varieties of trout are now widely distributed in the southern States. A trout fisherman using his landing-net is featured on the new 20-cent stamp. Less of a contemplative man's recreation is the deep sea game fishing illustrated on the 50-cent stamp (above). Cairns, Queensland, is the centre of this sport, which has recently been condemned by Australian conservationists and may be threatened by Japanese line trawling. The stamp shows the most popular game fish, the black marlin. Another stamp shows surf fishermen in South Australia, where whiting, salmon and even shark may be caught from the open beach.

C. W. HILL

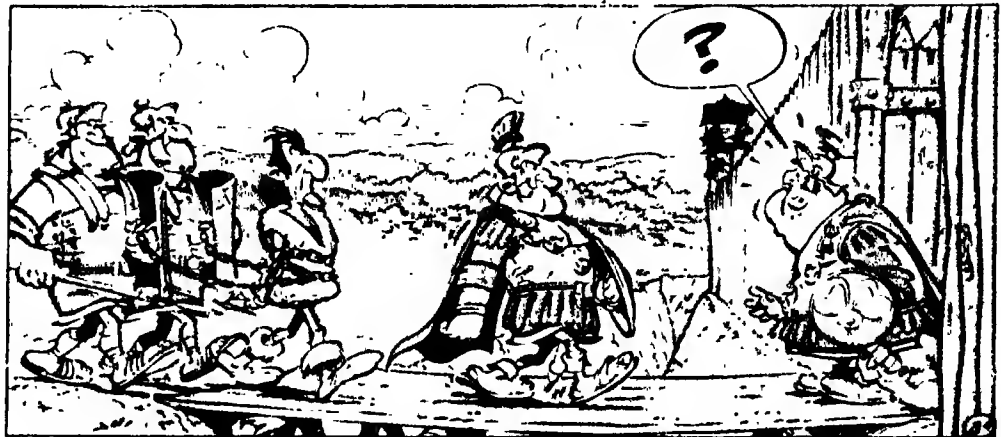
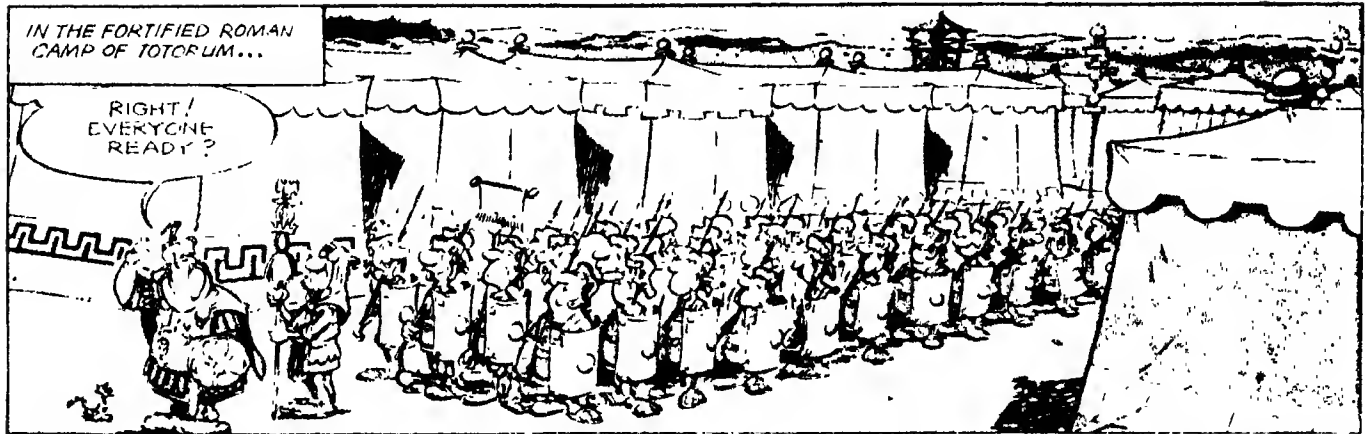
QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What is a waterspout?
2. When was the first Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed?
3. In which part of the body is glycogen stored?
4. What is mind blindness?
5. In which stadium in Paris has France played most of her international rugby matches?
6. What is jazz poetry?
7. What is a lepton?
8. What is another name for the philosophy of history?
9. What is the Greek mountain consecrated to the muses?
10. What is the name of the first series of Russian communication satellites?

ANSWERS

1. A tornado occurring at sea.
2. July 1963. The Treaty signed between Russia, USA and Britain in Moscow.
3. In the liver.
4. The inability to grasp the meaning of objects seen.
5. Parc des Princes in Paris.
6. Poetry meant to be read with accompaniment.
7. Any elementary particle that does not react or decay with strong interactions.
8. Metaphysics.
9. Hellicon.
10. Molniyas.





HERE, COME INTO MY TENT... DON'T START WITHOUT ME, YOU LOT. THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.

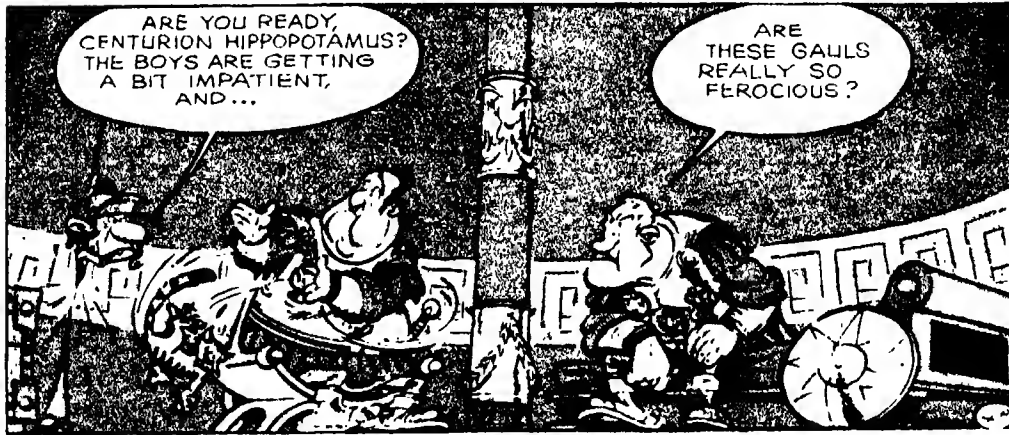


TODAY IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF GERGOVIA. THE PEOPLE OF THE NEARBY GAULISH VILLAGE HAVE A WAY OF CELEBRATING THE OCCASION BY ATTACKING THE NEIGHBOURING ROMAN GARRISONS.

AND YOU DON'T ATTEMPT TO STOP THIS LOCAL CUSTOM?

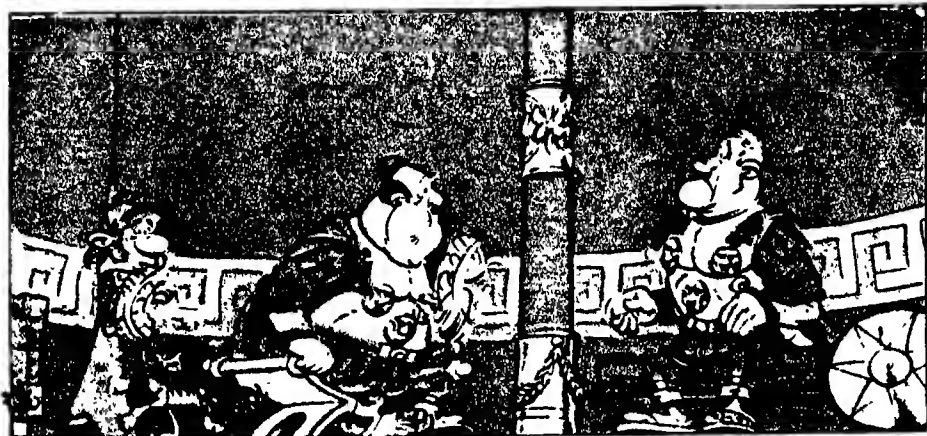


WE CERTAINLY DO! WE STOP IT BY LEAVING CAMP AND GOING ON MANOEUVRES!



ARE YOU READY, CENTURION HIPPOPOTAMUS? THE BOYS ARE GETTING A BIT IMPATIENT, AND...

ARE THESE GAULS REALLY SO FEROCIOUS?



WELL, TOO BAD. I'M ESCORTING A CORSICAN EXILE, AND HE'S SPENDING THE NIGHT IN THIS CAMP. YOU AND YOUR GARRISON ARE RESPONSIBLE TO CAESAR FOR HIS SAFE KEEPING. I'LL BE BACK TO PICK HIM UP TOMORROW.



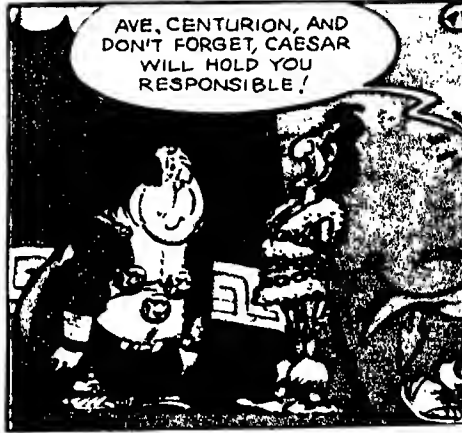
TOMORROW? WHERE ARE YOU GOING TODAY?

TO JOIN IN THE MANOEUVRES, OF COURSE!



BUT... BUT YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US! THE GAULS WILL SLAUGHTER US! WHAT'S MORE, IF THEY SEE WE'VE GOT A PRISONER HERE, THEY'LL...

BRING THE EXILE ALONG!



AVE, CENTURION, AND DON'T FORGET, CAESAR WILL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE!

TYTLER TEST

THE drama over the distribution of Assembly election tickets in New Delhi has generated its own brand of humour. A specimen of this was published in a weekly column of the New Delhi edition of *The Statesman*. The item is reproduced here for the benefit of those who have not read it. "The man, according to an eye-witness, was a simple-looking political worker. At the reception desk at the Prime Minister's house he demanded an audience with Mrs Gandhi. What was it about? He was asked. To represent to Mrs Gandhi against moves to deny him the Party nomination for the state Assembly elections, he replied. Ah! he had to go to the other wing of the building and see Mr Tytler. The aspirant was pleased with himself and wheeled round to go to Mr Tytler's room. 'Where is Hitler?' he demanded. A man answered that there was no Hitler around. There was a Tytler, and that was him. 'No, I have been asked to see Hitler,' he insisted. What's it about, Mr Tytler asked. The man gave him his story. Well, if he did not know who Tytler was, he did not deserve to be given the Party ticket. The man left the place bewildered and ticketless."

SON ABOVE SUN

FEROZE VARUN GANDHI, the two-month-old son of Sanjay Gandhi, has caused the departure from journalism of a promising young magazine editor. The masthead of the May issue of *Surya*, the monthly journal owned and published by Aamteshwar Anand, Sanjay Gandhi's mother-in-law, does not carry the name of its famous editor, Maneka Gandhi, Feroze Varun's mother. Maneka's entry into journalism, via the family paper, was not taken seriously by many and the work done by her for *Surya* in its initial days (when the journal enjoyed the patronage of the ruling family during the Emergency), was indeed insignificant. But it must be said to her credit that in the days when Mrs Gandhi was out of power, Maneka turned *Surya* into a powerful opposition mouthpiece, the issues on the Suresh-Sushma affair and the Jaguar deal being the highwater marks. Her departure from *Surya* had been rumoured since August-September last year when the doctors had re-



Maneka with Khuswant Singh

portedly told her to stay away from strenuous work in view of her frail health and pregnancy. But somehow she managed to carry on till the April issue of the magazine. With 'son' having taken precedence over 'sun' (*Surya*), one hopes that the magazine will not lose much of its colour and distinctive character which Maneka had very successfully imparted to it, though on occasions the lack of professional upbringing was exposed by a few instances of irresponsible journalism.

PLOY TO EMPLOY

IF YOU are a political worker, presently unemployed and want to join election campaigning, take a tip from some young men in Gurudaspur in Punjab and look out for a candidate who has a senior Government official as husband and who can get you a job after the elections. Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder, the Congress (I) MP from Gurudaspur, was so impressed with the work done by a group of young men for Lok Sabha election campaign that she persuaded her husband, Pritam Singh Bhinder, the police commissioner of Delhi, to recruit some of these 'loyalists'

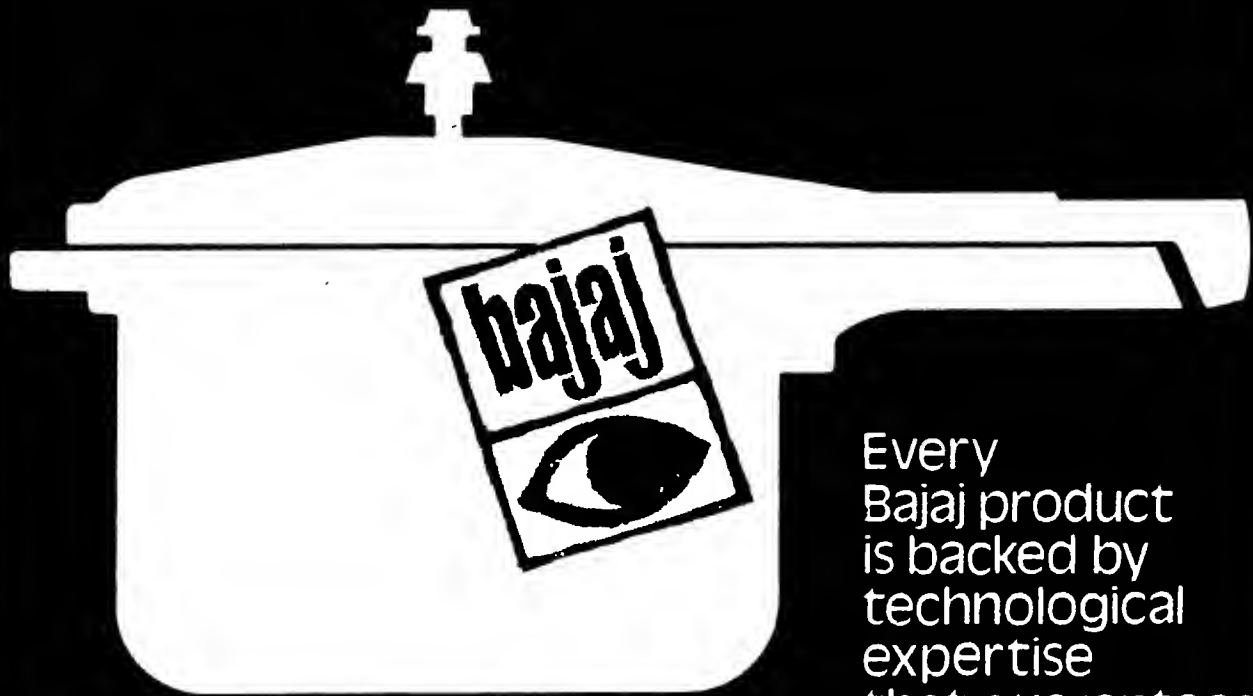
into his force. And so a senior deputy commissioner of Delhi Police accompanied by a recruiting inspector, was sent to Gurudaspur to recruit 280 young men from that constituency, without going through the normal formalities of a written test, etc.

IN THE DOGHOUSE

HAS Manmohan Singh been appointed member-secretary of the Planning Commission in order to remove him from the post of secretary, Economic Affairs Department (EAD) of the Finance Ministry? Interestingly, he has not even been given the status of a member like M.S. Swaminathan or Mohammad Fazal. The reason, apparently, is that he had annoyed the powers that be in negotiating a particular deal by the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for buying oil, kerosene and diesel from abroad. A global tender for a spot purchase was floated and six foreign companies responded. But to the dismay of the officials concerned, the company that won the tender, a European firm operating from the Gulf, was offered a contract for a full year instead of a spot purchase. The board of directors of IOC objected to the new deal. It pointed out that while an annual deal could be beneficial if the price rose it could also be detrimental because the possibility of a marginal decrease in the price should not be ruled out either. In case the deal was to be for one year, the IOC board insisted on either a fresh tender being floated or at least the five unsuccessful parties being given a chance to give their quotations for the new tender. Petroleum secretary B. B. Vohra and EAD secretary Manmohan Singh concurred with the IOC board as did Finance Minister R. Venkataraman. But the deal had the support of a powerful lobby in New Delhi. The Petroleum Minister, P. C. Sethi, was aghast at the way in which these officials were challenging the wishes of the lobby. The deal finally went through, resulting in a large payoff to a ruling Party MP from Madhya Pradesh. Later Manmohan Singh was removed from EAD. As a Planning Commission member-secretary he would be less of a nuisance as far as deals involving large payoffs were concerned.

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A black and white photograph of a man from the waist up, wearing a dark, textured suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark tie. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and out of focus.

dinesh

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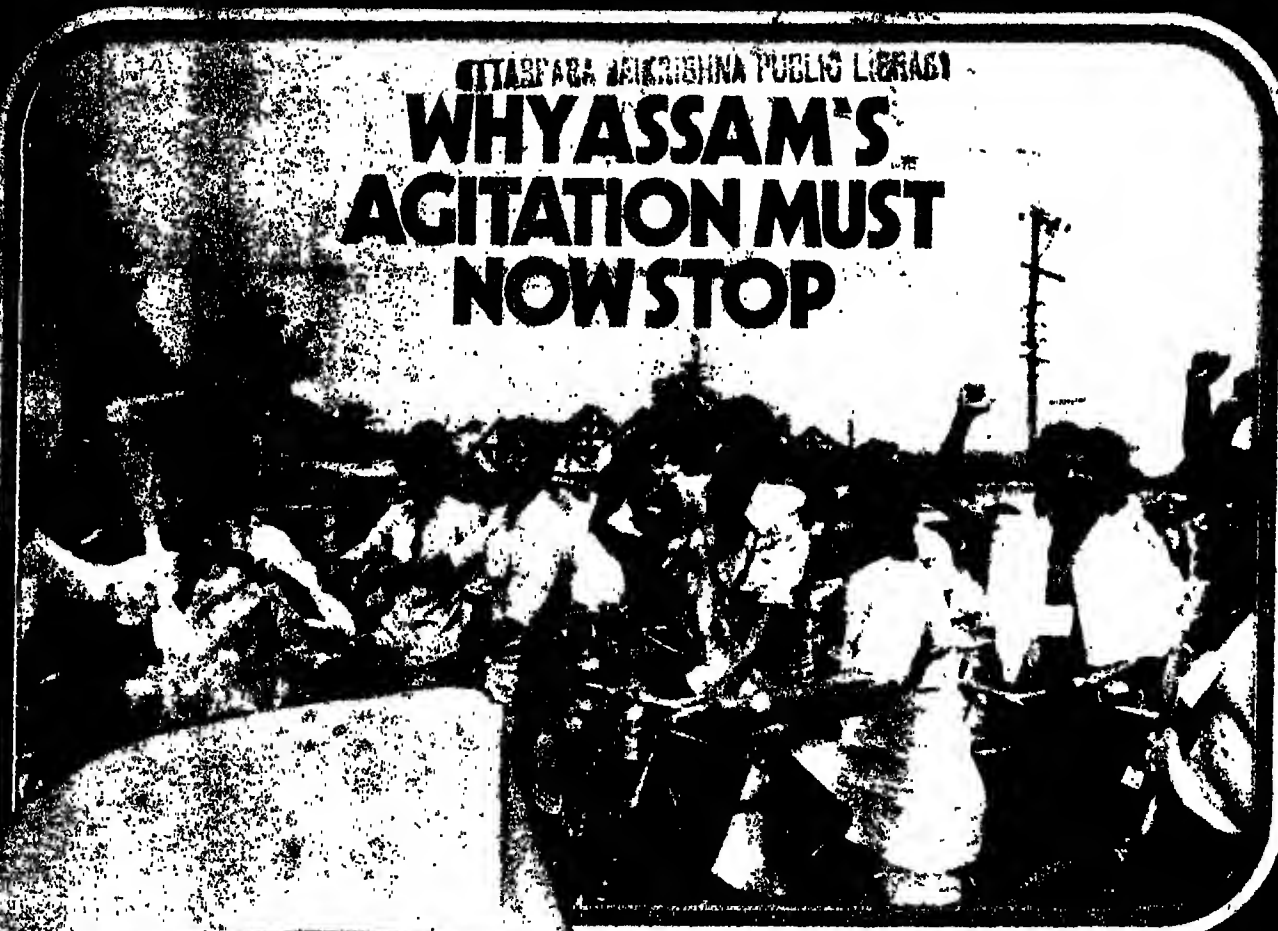
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WHY ASSAM'S AGITATION MUST NOW STOP



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M.J. Akbar in exclusive interview
after his resignation

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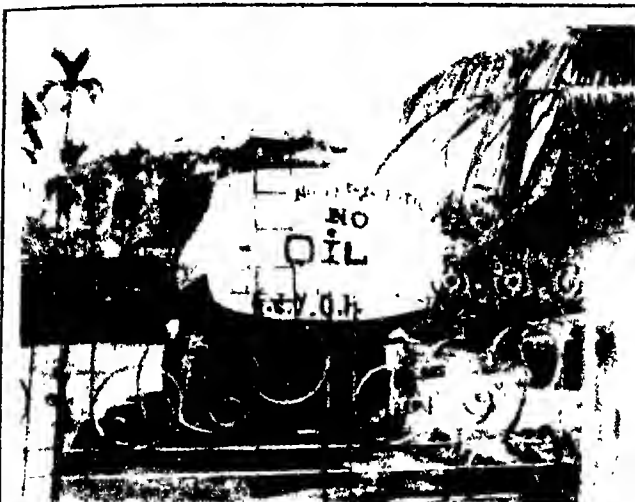
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Eight months is too long for an agitation like the one in Assam to continue. It has taken over 80 lives, crippled the state's economy, harmed national integration and created panic among the state's non-Assamese citizens. Now everyone's worst fears, of communal violence, seems to be coming true.



H. N. Bahuguna has lived up to his promise. He has quit the Congress (I), resigned his Lok Sabha seat and unleashed a massive broadside against Mrs Gandhi. How will this affect the Assembly polls in UP? As Bahuguna has a reputation for starting new phases in our national politics, how will the others take the cue from him?



It has been many years since India has had a world champion. But Prakash Padukone is not at all affected by his success and all the fame that goes with it. All the receptions and the publicity have not gone to his head, for he is still a very genuine person. SUNDAY presents an in-depth profile of the star.

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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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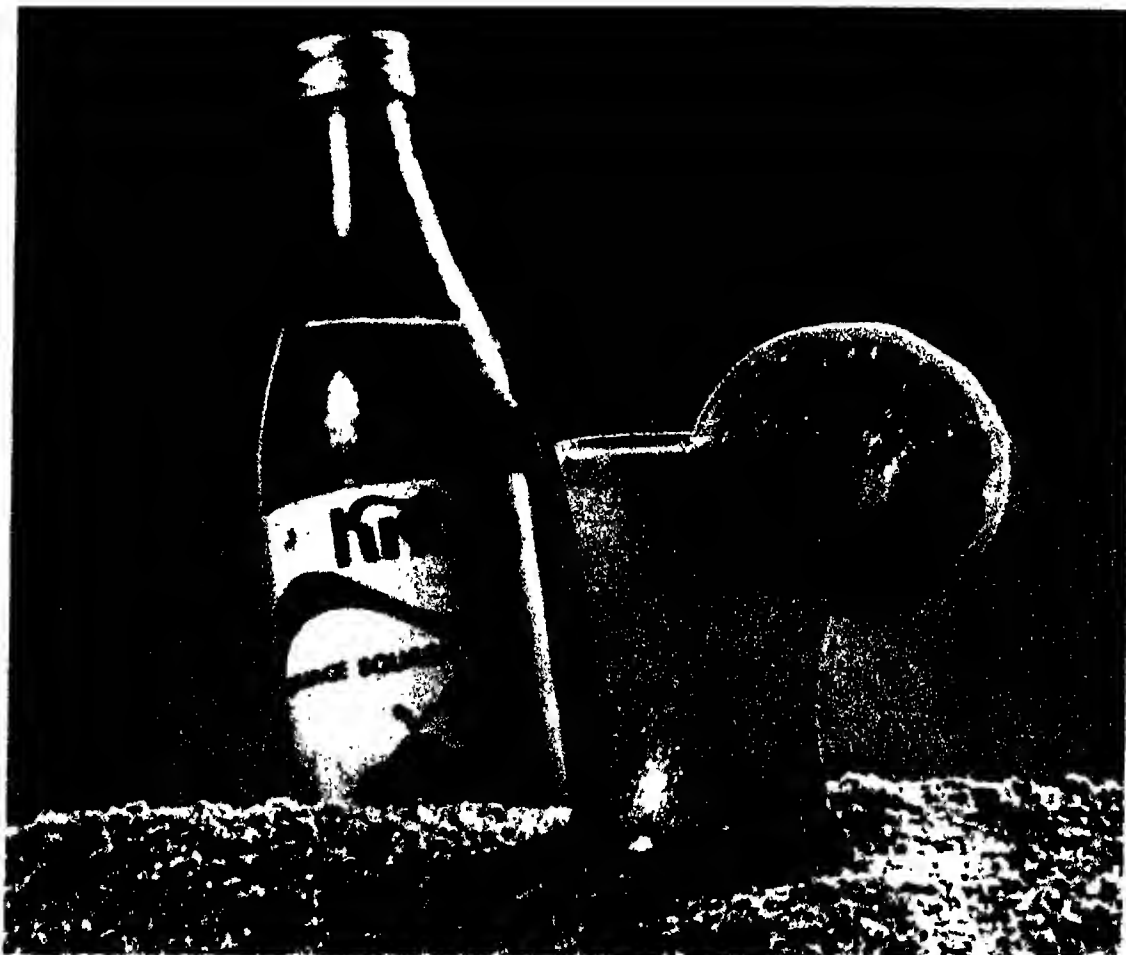


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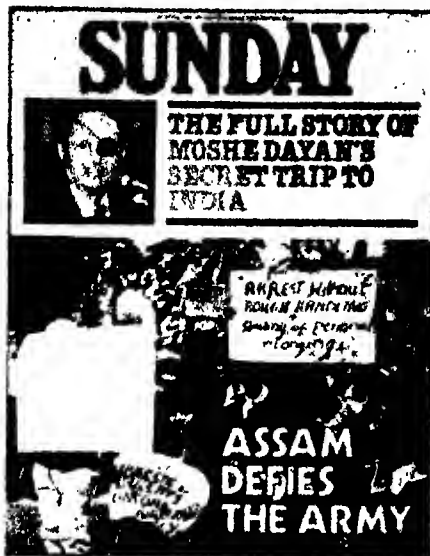
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Secret mischief

MJ. AKBAR's report on the "Full story of Moshe Dayan's secret trip to India" (April 27) reads like the unfinished script of a Hitchcock thriller movie. However, there was an element of anti-climax in the whole thing. This sort of journalism is really very appreciable. One wonders how seasoned politicians like Morarji Desai took such a calculated risk. It needs only an elementary knowledge of international affairs to be aware that the Israeli connection is the most sensitive issue with oil-producing Arab nations and our crude requirements are met only by them. Mr Desai's secret invitation to Moshe Dayan to visit India can only be called 'adventurous'. This sort of secret diplomacy is highly deplorable

when national interests are at stake. *Andres Tudu, Burdwan.*

MR AKBAR's story on Moshe Dayan's secret visit to India is simply fascinating. It is hard to believe that a figure like Moshe Dayan came to India like a thief. *Amrit Lall, Barasat, West Bengal.*

WHAT prompted the former Prime Minister, Mr Morarji Desai, to invite Moshe Dayan to take a secret trip to India remains a mystery. India's stand on the Arab-Israeli confrontation is too well known. Vajpayee too should be blamed for the idea. The episode must have tarnished the image of the Government of India. It has also revealed the fact that the government sought the help of America. The Israeli consul-general seems to have won even if it's on paper. Morarji Desai owes an explanation to the Indian people for encouraging this trip. *Shyamal Gupta, Calcutta.*

YOUR readers may be interested in a little background on India's Israeli connection. It has been like a grapevine that has been spreading on Indian soil ever since Israel was born. The Israel lobby had found strong supporters among the so-called Gandhian diehards of the Congress (O). Some of them fell for the kibbutz and moshava as alternatives to the Russian agricultural collectives and the Chinese communes. Jayaprakash Narayan and his socialist friends believed in the anti-USSR, pro-Western Socialist International brand of socialism. And US-backed Israel has been an essential part of this movement in our country. When the Janata Party gained momentum, India's

Israeli connection got much prominence. The Jana Sangh and its parent organisation, the RSS, had always cherished a secret love for Israel.

Jag Mohan, New Delhi.

ONE cannot but admire the courage of former Prime Minister Mr Desai for allowing Moshe Dayan to come to India and present Israel's point of view personally. There is no doubt that India is pro-Arab and it is mainly due to the oil politics. But does this mean that she should condemn Israel blindly? The Israelis are a very brave people and one cannot help admiring them. Moreover, Israel has been shouldering much greater responsibility than the Arabs who are clinging to worn out values. It seems we are non-aligned in name only. We are supposed to judge issues on their merits which we have failed to do. India's stand on the Afghan issue has made this obvious. If India is to play a meaningful role in world politics today then it should shed hypocrisy and assert its rights even if that displeases the Russians and the Arabs. *Mrs Krishna Malhotra, New Delhi.*

THE 'expose', as you call it, does not say when exactly Moshe Dayan visited this country. Neither the year nor the month is mentioned. We can only make a guesswork from the reference to Morarji Desai and Vajpayee. Again, it does not identify the house where the Israeli leader was supposed to be staying. Why this poverty of information? More important, you kept quiet all these days. You should have published the story before the Israeli newspaper came out with it.

V. Krishnamoorthy, Trivandrum.

Agitators, judges, executioners

"ASSAM defies the army" (April 27) could not really be considered an eye-opener. The agitation in Assam is taking a new turn. The agitators as well as the police officers have decided to give notice to the Bengalees to quit Assam as early as possible. But this can be done by the tribunal or the court. The Bengalees should take a firm stand against this kind of anti-national feeling of the Assamese-speaking people.

Ashish Sarkar, Dibrugarh.

I SINCERELY hope that good counsel will prevail over the leaders of the Assam movement and they will co-operate with the Prime Minister in settling the Assam question. Otherwise, it might have serious repercussion on the future of the north-eastern region. Not only that, the

foreign powers will jeopardise the national integrity.

Debabrata Sengupta, Howrah.

IF we go back to history we find that the Ahoms themselves are foreigners for they had come from Upper Burma and they are the ones who invaded India sometime around 13th century. Mongoloid by origin, the Ahoms have gradually adopted Hinduism. As far as the foreign nationals issue is concerned, the Ahoms should realise that they too are foreigners on the Indian soil. So the cut-off year should be 13th century and not 20th century. *Saswathi Ghose, Calcutta.*

SUBIR ROY speculates that Mr H. C. Sarin may repeat what he did in Telengana. I think that mere administrative solution will not be enough for Assam. The people of Assam do have genuine grievances but unfortunately the movement has taken a secessionist turn. The bourgeois, the trading community and

the feudal lords, in order to maintain their exploitation, have misdirected the movement. The Assamese people instead of rising against these exploiters started their struggle against the non-Assamese people. The Assamese people must be convinced that the whole country is aware of their problem and that it is the exploiters not the common non-Assamese people who are responsible for the present situation.

Marmabima Sen, Bangalore.

THE cover (April 27) shows a photograph of the agitation in Meghalaya. The photograph was taken in front of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. But the caption reads "Assam defies the Army".

A. Zaman, Gauhati.

SURELY a magazine of your stature should know the meaning of army. Your heading "Assam defies the Army" may be sensational but it was a thoughtless act on your part. The article nowhere refers to the

defence of the army. This is one organisation in the country which means business and is available when the need arises.
S. Mukherjee, New Delhi.

TV's true colours

SAUMITRA BANERJEE has raised a vital question in "A colourless scheme" (April 27). So long as the TV is considered a luxury item and is a source of entertainment there is little justification for exempting it from taxes. Doordarshan was brought into the scene to serve a meaningful social purpose. But so far what has been its achievement? The committee set up by the Government in September 1976 to examine the feasibility of colour TV came out with the observation that the "development programmes like Krishi Darshan, health education, science education and children's programmes should be given importance in the colour production as colour heightens the impact and the message will be more effective". If there are plans to include these and other developmental activities in colour TV as well as encourage community viewing of it then it would certainly be worthwhile.

Bijoy Kumar Jaiswal, Katihar.

Nth time, no mistake

THIS refers to "Soviets blundered in Afghanistan" (April 27) by Madhu Limaye. This is not the first time that the Soviets have blundered. Such blunders were committed so many times in the past. One could never forget the Soviet troops in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The countries threatened by the Soviet aggression—directly or indirectly—should be assured that they will be given prompt and effective help by the rest of the world.

Kiranmay Nanda, MLA West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

MADHU LIMAYE is right in stating that "the military intervention of the Soviet Union is a blunder of the first magnitude". He is equally right in saying that a national policy has to be evolved in response to the Soviet action. But I must say that the author himself has blundered in equating the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan with the American naval build-up in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet naval bases in the Indian Ocean stretch from Aden in the west to Danang and Cam Ranh Bay in the east. Surprisingly, it receives a fraction of the publicity. How many Iranians, Afghans or other south-west Asian people have been killed

by the Fifth Fleet? And how many by Soviet Mi-24 helicopters, T-54 tanks, napalm and chemical warfare attacks on the innocent villagers? Mr Limaye is expected to have a right perspective when he is dealing with such issues. Mr Limaye also says that the "Soviet Union is the largest country in the world. Its productive capacities are vast, and it now has achieved military parity with the United States." So, what is the justification for such a show of strength on a small country like Afghanistan? The article dismisses the western security interests in the west Asia. According to Mr Limaye, the Soviet interest in the Gulf is nil and the Americans although miles away have a "vital stake" in Afghanistan. "The question" is not "whether the Americans will accept a non-aligned Afghan regime with which the Soviets can live," the question is whether the Soviets will accept a non-aligned Afghanistan at all.

Ajit Kumar Roy, Calcutta.

CONFUSION! I cried out after going through the write-up. Throughout the article Madhu Limaye has tried to justify the Soviet action in Afghanistan. His point that India's security will be endangered is not clarified.

Dipankar Das Choudhury, Shillong.

Supreme power


THE last issue of the magazine carried a report about the search for a new source of energy. The report stated that the search for a new source of energy was being carried out by the Atomic Energy Commission. The report also stated that the search for a new source of energy was being carried out by the Atomic Energy Commission.

The search for a new source of energy is a very important task. It is a task that requires a lot of research and development. The Atomic Energy Commission is the body responsible for carrying out this task. The commission has been working on this task for many years and has made a lot of progress. It has discovered that there are many different ways to produce energy and that some of these ways are much more efficient than others.

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hydrogen as a possible substitute of oil and other sources of power would be dangerous optimism. Professor Sahas's dismissal of nuclear energy as inconsequential is frankly irresponsible and hardly substantiated by any factual evidence. The somewhat slow progress of the nuclear power programme in our country is not a reflection of the irrelevance of nuclear power but probably a rather sad commentary on our management of the research and development programme as a whole.

The search for a new source of energy is a very important task. It is a task that requires a lot of research and development. The Atomic Energy Commission is the body responsible for carrying out this task. The commission has been working on this task for many years and has made a lot of progress. It has discovered that there are many different ways to produce energy and that some of these ways are much more efficient than others.



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WHY ASSAM'S AGITATION MUST NOW STOP

The students are not professional agitators. Nor do Prafulla Mohanto and his men see the agitation as the last Battle of Saraighat. They have legitimate fears about the percentage of immigrants in Assam's population, and now they are showing every sign of wanting a dialogue. The time has come for Delhi to withdraw the Army, and the AASU and Gana Sangram Parishad to withdraw the agitation—long before a point of no return is reached. **TOOSHAR PANDIT** reports from Gauhati

Asad Sinha



WHEN the newspapers announced on May 23 that Mrs Indira Gandhi had called an all-Party conference on May 31, it was the clearest sign so far that there might yet be a sensible solution in Assam. This was tacit admission that the government basically would use cooperation now instead of provocative confrontation. The chessgame in Assam has reached a dangerous point; tensions could easily explode into virulent clashes between the various communities. The recent bloodshed at Howli and Tinsukia is a gruesome reminder of what could happen: 85 people have already fallen victim to the eight-month-old movement. There are perceptible signs of growing restlessness among the non-Assamese, many of whom think that the movement is directed specifically against them, whether they are recent immigrants or not. Fears of being displaced and losing their hard-earned possessions have become a recurring nightmare for them. And numerically, the Assamese and the non-Assamese are evenly matched.

Every sensible person in Assam is convinced that conciliation rather than confrontation is the answer to the impasse, and that is why one hears so much about "dialogue" and "negotiation" these days in Assam. Even the All Assam Students Union (AASU), which has spearheaded the agitation, is now strongly inclined not only towards negotiation, but is making a deliberate effort to keep itself away from the extremism which is now beginning to manifest itself even more strongly. Provocative pamphlets and inflammatory wall-posters have begun to appear in the name of the agitation. One recent poster said: 'Between the snake and the Bengali, kill the Bengali first'. The AASU has disowned such sentiments. And this is important because the AASU forms the heart of the Gana Sangarm Parishad (GSP, a united front of ten groups and associations officially in charge of the movement). But the AASU can hardly ignore the fact that the longer the stalemate continues, the greater the chance of militants increasing their influence.

Prafulla Mohanta and his followers in AASU are not among those who see the agitation as a prelude to secession, or the Last Battle of Saraihat, or even as the first renaissance. They are well-meaning people who genuinely feel that if the immigrant population is not thinned out, the Assamese will soon be reduced to a minority in their own state. Their ambitions are not political power (although the same cannot be said for some of the other factions of the GSP). The students want this problem to be solved: soon, and peacefully. Moreover, the students had already

paid a huge price. They have been away from their schools and colleges for eight months now, and many of them are becoming impatient to return to their classes. "We have already missed quite a few all-India selection tests," one of them moaned to this reporter. Another complained that the students of Cachar, who had not been agitating, had gained through default. A third pointed out: "Losing a year is bound to put us at a disadvantage in the job market". Clear proof of the students' desire to return to their classes is available from the city bookshops: once again books have begun selling. "Why else should they buy books now?" a city bookseller asked.

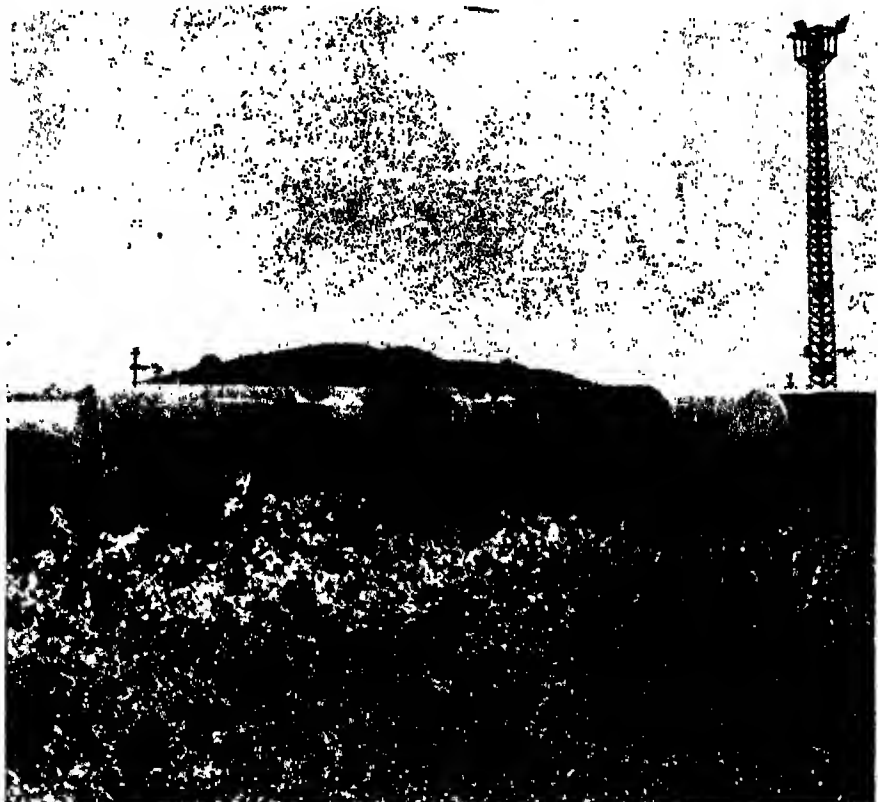
People believe that it is the professional politicians who created this mess. First, they turned a blind eye to largescale immigration in order to gain political leverage among the new populations. And now they are delaying a settlement. Circumstances catapulted students to the leadership of the movement; indeed, the students came to the fore because of the people's lack of confidence in the politicians' ability either to solve the problem or lead a genuine movement.

But the signs of weariness are visible now. And the internal debates between the "hawks" and the "doves" is finding expression in the occasional indecision in the conduct of the agitation. It was a bit of an anti-climax when the AASU announced a two-day pause

Oil is the big weapon

after having worked up the agitation to a feverish pitch, culminating in a spectacular torchlight procession all over the state, in which millions participated, on the evening of May 16. After this two-day holiday, they announced a programme to evict "foreigners" from government lands and the tribal belts, to be followed by a nine-day nonparticipation movement by government and semi-government employees from May 21. Nobody needed to be persuaded to make these gestures a success; the non-participation, in particular, was complete. But all this was more by way of keeping the hearth warm rather than stoking up fresh fires. In truth, the tempo of the movement has clearly slackened, after the AASU decided not to press its ultimatum to the government to screen and deport "foreigners" by May 15.

The Assamese certainly have not given up, far from it; but the atmosphere is surprisingly relaxed and is hardly reminiscent of the passion of a revolution. The picketers at Narengi, the pipeline headquarters of Oil India, which has been one of the focal points of the movement ever since the agitators stopped the flow of crude to Barauni on December 27, now wear a tired look. The lush green fields near the Judges' Court, that had been converted into an open prison to hold the unending crowds of demonstrators courting jail, has once again become the haunt of budding footballers, starry-eyed couples, and elderly retired folk out



Dev. Prasad S. Chha

for a gossip. Picketers are exchanging gossip with CRP personnel and having tea with them in front of the state secretariat at Dishpur. Most shops and establishments are open. If there are fewer vehicles on the road, it is only because fuel is in short supply. Of course, vital installations continue to be disrupted. The cement plant at Bokajan has closed down. Banks and post offices are not offering normal services. But, considering the magnitude of the movement, these are at best minor inconveniences.

It was perhaps inevitable that the movement would lose some of its momentum after a while. But more important is the fact that the AASU leaders have deliberately opted for a more controlled agitation, unsure of what a combination of Army crackdown and reprisals from the non-Assamese could lead to. Plus, there is always the fear that the leadership of the movement could always pass into the hands of extremist elements if the confrontation took on Bangladesh proportions.

THE AASU leaders were anxious to resume a dialogue with the government as soon as opportunity provided. It was hardly a coincidence that Mr H. C. Sarin, the principal adviser to the Government of Assam, and Mr B. C. Verghese, of the Gandhi Peace Foundation (who was in touch with the students), talked about resumption of negotiations on the same day, May 20. Both knew that the students were willing to talk.

Sarin had been carefully preparing the stage for such a meeting ever since he assumed office on April 21. His first decision was to overrule those zealous bureaucrats of the Union Home Ministry who wanted to use force to settle the Assam problem. Simultaneously, he opened a channel for communication with the students through influential people enjoying the students' confidence. Prominent among them was the Jnanpith award winning Assamese novelist, Dr Biran Bhattacharya. Sarin met him twice for dinner at the government guest house where he was living before leaving Gauhati for talks with Mrs Gandhi on May 18. Early in May, Mrs Gandhi's troubleshooter for Assam, Mr Yashpal Kapoor, had a secret meeting with some of the student leaders and their advisers in Shillong. Sarin also kept in touch with a number of AASU advisers: Kumud Nath Sharma, the dean of the faculty of law in Gauhati University and official "interpreter" for the AASU leaders at meetings with Delhi leaders; H. K. Borpujar, professor emeritus, Gauhati University; Lalit Rajkhowa, lecturer



at the Law College; Nagan Sarkia, general secretary, Asom Sahitya Sabha; and Ganesh Phukan, a former finance secretary and brother-in-law of the owner of Assam Tribune. These efforts were supplemented by two former chief justices, M. C. Pathak and Baharul Islam, and a former vice-chancellor of Gauhati University, Dr Mathura Nath Goswami.

So when Sarin floated the idea of two-stage discussions—first a dialogue and then the negotiations—he was confident that his proposal would be welcome. After his return from Delhi on May 21, he held a series of meetings with some of the student leaders and their advisers to ascertain their views about this proposal. At one of those meetings, the chief secretary, Mr Rameshchandra, was also present. Sarin gave the categorical assurance that the government was willing to release the detainees; it would work out a phased programme for the reinstatement of those government employees who had been dismissed for taking part in the movement; and, lastly, it would gradually withdraw the emergency measures it had adopted as the talks progressed. The government was rudely shaken out of its belief that there would be talks when the AASU leaders made a public statement demanding restoration of the April 2 situation as an essential pre-condition for any dialogue.

But if the government was surprised by this, nobody else was. The AASU is riding a tiger from which it is not easy to dismount. Nobody can afford to carry the charge of betraying the movement as a millstone around his neck for the rest of his life, and with so many leaders in jail, any hint of compromise will not be easy. Further, the movement is already divided between the hawks and

the doves. If the AASU, operating from the Cotton College Students Union Hall represents the doves, then three important constituents of the GSP—the Purbanchallya Loka Parishad led by Nibaran Bora, the Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal led by Girin Barua, and Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad led by Prabin Gogoi—definitely represent the other end of the spectrum. It is these militants who are resisting the resumption of negotiations. The reason is simple. Unlike the students, these people have political ambitions, and would like to use the movement to attain power in the next elections to the State Assembly.

Nibaran Bora has never been able to win an election, although he has tried several times. Originally a socialist, he was senior to Golap Borbora who rose to become the first Janata CM of Assam—a fact which so enraged Nibaran Bora that he promised to bring down Golap Borbora's government in less than six months. But the politicians are not powerful enough to sustain the movement if the AASU withdraws; they do not have the credibility which the students have (Nibaran Bora had contested the last elections on the slogan of economic independence for the north east, but he lost). The politicians therefore will fight hard to ensure that the AASU remains within the fold. The importance of the students was evident when the Gana Sangram Parishad's call for a satyagraha failed in February after the AASU had temporarily suspended the movement.

On the other hand, no AASU leader can afford to be branded as a tool of Mrs Gandhi. The president of AASU has already become the victim of a smear campaign: it is being asked why he has not been arrested when the rest of the

leaders have been detained. After all, the government clearly knows where exactly he has gone "underground". There is, in fact, a deliberate effort to drag the AASU towards a more militant stance. It is a kind of a vicious circle, and when required, blackmail is clearly being used. How?

On May 14 at 7 p.m., the Gana Sangram Parishad issued a statement asking the people to prepare themselves for what it described as a "massive programme of action" if the government did not start screening and deportation of the "foreigners" by May 15. On the same night, in a separate statement, the AASU asked the people not to take up any programme of detection or deportation of the foreign nationals even if the Central Government did not offer an acceptable solution by the end of the deadline of May 15 set by the AASU. Obviously the GSP and the AASU were not speaking the same language. But the very next day, the AASU fell in line, and issued a declaration that the "people of Assam will have no alternative but to take up the matter of detecting the foreigners in phases". This is how pressure tactics work.

Even then, the tone and tenor of AASU is far less shrill than that of the GSP; the former is far more keen on negotiations. An instance. Reacting to Sarin's call for a dialogue, the AASU said that one condition for the resumption of talks must be that the government would not talk of either 1967 or 1971 as the base year. Significantly, the statement did not insist on its own demand for the acceptance of 1951 as the cut-off year, implying that the negotiations could be resumed if both sides started off on a clean slate. On the other hand, the Gana Sangram Parishad insisted that "the government shall have to accept 1951 as the dateline for the identification of foreigners" before the discussions could be resumed. The two statements clearly reflect the divergent trends within the movement, and highlight the impediments in the way to a peaceful settlement.

But Delhi, after a clumsy effort at using the stick (which failed) has clearly decided to use the carrot now. The "crackdown" was defeated by the Assamese people themselves when in one defiant gesture they marched out onto the streets the day the armed forces marched in. The process of releasing the detained leaders has now begun, and the indications are that the efforts of Messrs Pathak, Islam and Goswami will bear fruit and negotiations will resume. Will both the government and the leaders of the movement be wiser in their discussions the next time around?

How backward is the North East?

By A. N. PRABHU

ALPHABETICALLY, Assam is next only to Andhra Pradesh in the list of Indian states. Economically, it is somewhere at the bottom. It is a paradox of Assam being rich and the Assamese poor. This eastern state along with six other newlyborn states and union territories—Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh—have rich resources of minerals and raw materials. Only the oil in Assam has been exploited so far.

While politicians made hay when the sun was shining, the people of the north-east grew poorer. Poverty is steep in the region. As the population has increased, so has the percentage of those living below the poverty line. In 1960-61, 16.31 per cent in the rural and 22.63 per cent in the urban areas were below poverty line. In the next decade (1970-71), the percentage increased to 33.09 for rural and 40.30 for urban areas. (Source: Seventh Finance Commission). This says enough about the meagre work done to help the down-trodden.

The only area where development has taken place is oil. Assam's daily production of crude is estimated to be worth about Rs 3 crores a day, or about Rs 90 crores a month: this would mean about Rs 1,000 crores a year. The state's annual budget has been in the region of Rs 300 crores only. Statistics give but a glimpse of the real situation. Yet they do partly indicate the reason for popular feelings: Assam produces about five million tonnes of crude a year. According to Assam Entrepreneurs' Association, which submitted a detailed memorandum to the Prime Minister in February this year, for every tonne of crude oil processed and sold, the Union Government receives a gross amount of about Rs 2,000. Of this, Assam gets only Rs 42 a tonne by way of royalty. The Union Government, however, gets as excise Rs 864 a tonne. This would mean Assam's share of oil revenue every year is Rs 29.4 crores (that is Assam's royalty plus share of excise) and the Centre's is Rs 604.8 crores.

At the present unstable rates, Assam crude is said to be worth 866,775,000 US dollars. Being highly aromatic, Assam crude could fetch even more. The association's estimate of Assam's oil production, based on the 'real value' at world prices, is about Rs 7,000 crores a year.

Meanwhile, large quantities of natural gas, an important bi-product of oil extraction, have been burnt wastefully, thanks to the apathy of Central planners. The Assamese call this "criminal wastage". The crude

has been pumped out for more than four decades but no plan has been envisaged to make use of the gas.

The Assamese learnt that oil held the key to success in their talks with the Centre: it could force the Centre to concede their demands. The Assamese also witnessed how the high-paid white-collar Oil India officials struck work, holding the country to ransom for three days last year. The Oil India strike thus set the precedent for the current agitation.

Assam supplies some 80 per cent of the domestic onshore oil production. Yet there is no downstream production. In Gujarat, Baroda has developed into a petro-chemical centre. Assam has nothing of the kind. It has a fertiliser factory and a small Methanol plant at Namrup and a DMT plant at Bongaigaon. Besides, the polyester fibre plant at Bongaigaon was originally meant to supply fibres for ultimate conversion into fabrics. The idea was to gainfully employ local weavers. But no effort has been made to process the plant's 30,000 tonnes of polyester fibre. To say this is "neglect" would be a gross understatement. The Assamese are suffering only for their humility perhaps. This, despite Assam's shortage of foodgrains which undoubtedly is at the root of the present trouble. It is preposterous that a region so rich in resources is deficient in foodgrains.

The North Eastern Council has under its administration a total geographical area of 2.55 lakh sq. kms. The area under cultivation is only 0.33 lakh sq. kms.—about 12 per cent of the land area. The total production of foodgrains in the region at present is 3.5 million tonnes. Going by the Government of India's yardstick of 474 grammes per day per head as the average food requirement, the region needs a total of 4.6 million tonnes of foodgrains. The region thus shows a deficit of 1.1 million tonnes of foodgrains a year. (Source: NEC publication Number 8). The region also has tremendous potential for generating hydel power. One estimate puts its capacity at 12,000 mw. The total availability of power at the moment is, however, 156.73 mw whereas the estimated peak demand is for 333 mw. The shortfall was 177 mw in 1979-80 (Source: NEC publications). The per capita power consumption in the north eastern region is 25 kwh compared to the all-India average of 120 kwh. Investment in the region has been among the lowest—Rs 13,858 lakhs—a little higher than Himachal Pradesh's Rs 7,128 lakhs (which is another state with high potential for hydel generation).

Income from excise, which is an

indicator of the state industrial development, is also low. While agriculture has not yet developed appreciably, Assam's excise revenue from items other than potable liquor was Rs 2.67 lakhs against Bihar's Rs 252 lakhs, Himachal Pradesh's Rs 26.87 lakhs and Jammu and Kashmir's Rs 6.03 lakhs. Investment in irrigation not been high either. It was Rs 38 crores in 1978-79 against Andhra Pradesh's Rs 7,875 lakhs, Bihar's Rs 71,082 lakhs, Punjab's Rs 10,571 lakhs, Haryana's Rs 27,624 lakhs and Sikkim's Rs 39 lakhs. Assam's revenue from taxes showed an increase from Rs 12.27 crores in 1960-61 to Rs 61.20 crores in 1976-77. Kerala's on the other hand increased phenomenally from Rs 20.19 crores to Rs 106.49 crores in 1960-61 to Rs 208.46 crores in 1976-77 and Punjab's from Rs 25.66 crores to Rs 201.98 crores (Source: Seventh Finance Commission). The Finance Commission's estimates of comparable per capita state domestic product at current prices shows a small increase in the case of Assam. The following table has been compiled from the Seventh Finance Commission report:

COMPARABLE ESTIMATES OF PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE

	1970-71	Average 73-74 to 75-76
Andhra Pradesh	586	928
Assam	570	791
Bihar	418	645
Gujarat	845	1,134
Haryana	932	1,399
Punjab	1,063	1,586
Maharashtra	811	1,349
Madhya Pradesh	489	779
Uttar Pradesh	493	715
West Bengal	729	1,033
All-India figures	625	940

Transport and communications have been the north-east's major handicap. The region is precariously linked with North Bengal through a narrow neck of road. The result is not only that the region is economically undeveloped but the people have to pay relatively higher prices for consumer goods. Worse, it has encouraged the feeling that the region is cut off from the mainland.

Barring Assam, the entire region has only two sets of railway tracks, more symbolic than of any real value. Tripura has 12 kms of railway track and Nagaland nine kms. To add to the difficulties, there are two gauges. The entire requirement of consumer items—steel, foodgrains, cement, salt and other items—have to be brought from other parts of India. The region is rich in limestone of high quality for making cement. The Mawmluh-Cherra and Bokajan cement units in the region produce only five lakhs tonnes a year. The shortfall has to be made up by bringing cement from as far as Bihar and Orissa. At the most, the railways can carry only 3.5 lakhs tonnes. The region, therefore suffers from perpetual shortage of this vital construction material.



Stranded wagons carrying Assam's produce to the rest of India

Besides oil, the region has commercially exploitable minerals such as limestone and dolomite, fossil fuels such as coal (of which it has an estimated reserve of 1,000 million tonnes), refractory grade silimanite, graphite and fire clays. The value of mineral production in the region amounts only to 7.5 per cent of the value of national production and forms 6.9 per cent of the national income. The major contribution to this is from petroleum production. This alone accounts for 85 per cent of the total mineral production. Which means other minerals have hardly been exploited.

There is a strong case for rapid development of the north-east. The current agitation has driven the point home more sharply than ever. The first thing to do is to link the region with the rest of the country. The Government of India seems to have taken note of the intense feeling of the people: a committee of Ministers acknowledged the region's needs the

other day. It noted that almost one-fifth of the total outlay in the entire country for laying new railway tracks and converting gauges has been allocated for improvement of rail communications in the north-east. The outlay for 1980-81 is about Rs 17 crores and half of this will be spent on work in Assam. The work includes the laying of a parallel line on the busy New Bongaigaon-Cauhati route and the construction of six new tracks to serve Assam and other north eastern states. The length of these tracks is about 213 kms and laying them is estimated to cost about Rs 52 crores. Besides, a techno-economic survey which proposed laying new tracks in the Lumding-Badarpur section costing Rs 2.3 crores has been approved.

One tends to be cynical about the government setting up committees which merely "take stock" of the progress made. The general feeling is that they are useless. It is for the government to prove the cynics wrong.

'Mrs Gandhi is Sanjay's rubber stamp'



The news was hardly surprising: It was inevitable that the all-but-public quarrel between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Congress (I) Secretary General H. N. Bahuguna would end in the latter leaving the former's Party. This time Bahuguna added a touch of difference to his resignation—not merely did he leave the Party, but he also resigned his Parliamentary seat since he had won on the Congress (I) ticket. M. J. AKBAR met him at his house at 5 Sunehri Bagh Road in Delhi on May 21. He was not planning to stay in this spacious Ministerial bungalow much longer; he would move as soon as he got another house. His supporters from UP were dropping in to see him and take instructions on whom to support in the coming Assembly elections. Bahuguna himself was off that night to Allahabad, Lucknow and Kanpur to begin his campaign against Mrs Gandhi.

of the nation. The change in 1977 was consistent with the basic values of the Congress because democracy, freedom of expression, independence of judiciary, etcetera were restored. Therefore, that battle for emancipation should not be considered a change of Parties, we participated on the right side. But, I do agree, that since the Party which was returned to power was a conglomerate of varied ideas, composed of elements who were also inconsistent with the ideological grounding which we had received in the Congress, such as the Jana Sangh, it would have been wise on my part not to have remained a part of the Janata, not to have become a part

of that Government, not to have agreed to the merger of the CFD in the Janata. I have already admitted that. I have said that I owe an apology to the nation for this. The only consideration before me was that a new alternative (the Janata) was trying to take birth, and I would have been accused of sabotage if I had tried to raise the banner of revolt right in the beginning. This happened to be my primary consideration in going along with the stream for some time, and trying not to change the current. My disenchantment, for that matter the nation's disenchantment, with the Janata Party grew very fast. I have earlier stated the reasons in Sunday. I tried, to correct things. I argued, I pleaded (to change) the Janata's communal character, to make its policies socialist. Nobody in the Janata Party can say that my change was a sudden change.

Now, when I left the Janata I did not join the Lok Dal: that is a com-

Q YOU have changed four Parties in the last four years. Is there no place for H. N. Bahuguna in Party politics?

A: Since the imposition of the Emergency, Indian politics has been passing through a very uneven phase. When you accuse me of changing Parties, I would only like to tell you that the Congress in which I have worked for 41 years, the Congress of Gandhi and Nehru, the Congress of the freedom struggle, gave us a value system, a grounding in politics. This value system was totally derailed when the Emergency was imposed. Therefore, in 1977, I think it was the call of duty and ideological commitment to have forsaken the Party in the interest

As Cabinet Minister, I would not have been a dumb, driven cattle

mon misconception. I revived the Congress for Democracy. We had a convention, drew up a 31-point programme, showed it to everybody, including Chaudhury Charan Singh. I met dead ends. The only person who (responded), on her own, was Mrs Indira Gandhi. And when she met me, and talked to me in a language which was not like her normal style. (I have known her all my life, we have been in the same Party for 47 years, she comes from the same town as I. I have known her from childhood), I found that there was a change, an element of repentance for past mistakes, and I thought that that perhaps was the only way that I could help bring the administration of the country back on the rails. I also believed that Mrs Gandhi would provide the healing touch. The administration had been badly shaken, the quality of governance had fallen. Communal riots had overshadowed our whole political life. The nation was losing its very identity. At that point of time I thought that a changed Indira Gandhi, who approached me on her own, where I was approaching everybody else... Having failed to see salvation anywhere else, I fell into this, well, trap, in good faith. I believe that human beings do change.

Q: You never suspected that you were being used?

A: I did, but Mrs Gandhi said, 'I have come to you only because I felt that we had done a wrong to you'.

Q: Were these her very words?

A: These are her very words. And she asked me, 'Did I go to anyone else?' This made me feel that she was being very honest. The way she called me, accepted 30 of the CFD's 31 points, included them in the manifesto, told everybody 'We are including these points in the manifesto and Mr Bahuguna and Mr Narasimha Rao will join them up'... Well, I couldn't bargain for anything more. After all, a political agreement is not written on stamped paper. I thought Mrs Gandhi had begun collecting the pieces, Indian politics had become so fragmented by then, and, I am sorry to say, continues to be so... This long letter of mine (sent before the resignation) to Mrs Gandhi shows the aberrations that have crept into her politics.

I first wrote to Mrs Gandhi on January 7, even before she had constituted her government—nobody can say that I did this because she did not make me a Minister, there was no ministry then—outlining what should be done. I talked of national consensus. I talked of applying the healing touch. I talked of assuring the administration that there would be no victimisation. I talked of looking into the north-east. My point is: what is a political Party and what should politicians do in this country? Share the booty quietly, accept the aberrations, or point your finger out, even at the risk of being pointed back at?

Q: Mrs Gandhi, in her reply to you, has implied that you would not have created problems for her if she had made you a Minister.

A: Then why didn't she do it? It

was easy enough for her. She knew very well that my being inside the Cabinet means trouble for her. She didn't take me because she knew that it would be difficult for her to carry me along. I would not have been a dumb, driven cattle. I am a human being.

Q: Are you suggesting that the other Ministers in Mrs Gandhi's present Cabinet are dumb, driven cattle?

A: I am sorry, I won't say that, they are very good people, but at the moment they have assumed that posture. They are honourable people, but they have assumed that posture (of being dumb, driven cattle). I have been writing to Mrs Gandhi continuously. I raised almost all questions, from the simple removal of the ban on textbooks imposed by the Janata, to the creation of a peace-keeping force, onto to a commission to find out the conditions of those living below the poverty line. But all this went unheeded. She tells me I keep busy thinking about myself. What else is she doing? (getting excited) Changing officers, punishing officers, promoting officers, rewarding officers, rewarding people who have stood by her: her only test is, who is with her, her test is not who has served the nation, or who has the capacity to serve the nation best. Her only worry is who is with her.



Q: ARE you trying to imply that a structure for dictatorship is being created?

A: This country will demolish any such structure in no time if anybody tries to create one, but these are the trends, and they should be checked well in time. Therefore, I went on raising my voice. Anybody should see that if I was interested in the loaves and fishes of office, then the way to it did not lie in the manner I behaved from January onwards. Raising questions, raising policy issues, raising objections, speaking out in public. In the Hindi newspaper *Hindustan*, in mid-January, I gave an interview, and one question was what would happen to the government servants who had dealt with Maruti or the Shah commission. I said that the Congress culture is that no government servant shall be punished if he was doing his duty at the behest of the outgoing government. But Mrs Gandhi did not heed that. From N. K. Singh to R. C. Sharma is a long story. The number of persons sent out and sent in is not something small. You cannot have personalised administration, it should be impersonal, it should be objective, to maintain the morale of the administration.

Now, I have made a public statement that the Congress culture is opposed to such a thing and I hoped that this government would not do such a thing. Do you think Mrs Gandhi did not know what I was saying. I was saying this even at public meetings. All through my election campaign (for the 1980 Parliament) I spoke against the Emergency. Wherever I went I said that the Emergency was a bad thing, and I want to tell you this again: I never gave up my

posture with regard to Mrs Gandhi. I merely said that she wanted me to join her, she says she is a changed person. I took the people into full confidence all around the country. But the Press was so angry with me at that time that this went largely unreported except in a few places. Therefore, you cannot say that this eruption of mine is based on anger arising out of personal ambition, that is less than fair. You might ask, why didn't I say all this earlier. If I had resigned just after the Cabinet had been formed, people would have turned around and said that just because I did not get a place in the Cabinet I was behaving in this fashion. Even after I sent in my resignation from the Party posts, I waited for nine days, hoping that she would call me in front of a working committee meeting and ask me to substantiate the charges. I waited and waited, I gave her full nine days. I have patience. But these nine days have been considered a loss by my friends.

Q: You mean you could have begun campaigning against Mrs Gandhi earlier?

A: I am not going in for narrow political gains in the Assembly elections. That's not my idea, that's not my purpose. My purpose is to raise the political climate of this country to a level from where nobody will be able to harm its basic structure.

Q: Have you found any, what might be called 'Emergency' tendencies, in the last few months?

A: The way the administration is being demoralised by supersessions, promotions, demotions, transfers, and the way the (administrative) apparatus is being freely used for personal purposes is a bad sign, a bad beginning.

Q: You have said that Sanjay Gandhi is the real boss of Congress (I). What do you mean by that?

A: He makes all the decisions. Mrs Gandhi is merely a rubber stamp. I have known this from within. Though I have never met him after the elections—except once, when I went to Mrs Gandhi's house to congratulate her on January 7 or 8 I bumped into him, and I congratulated him on his victory and he congratulated me: except for those few sentences, I have not seen him, I have not talked to him. But I can watch things happening. Even when Mrs Gandhi does not know anything, orders are made, issued.

Q: Can you give any example?

A: Well, this happened before everybody. During the Parliamentary election campaign, Sanjay Gandhi got Virbahadur Singh of UP nominated to the central parliamentary board, as a permanent invitee, like Mr Gundu Rao. After the elections were over, Mr Virbahadur Singh came to attend a CPB meeting. So, 12 or 13 of us were sitting, including Mrs Gandhi. Mr Virbahadur came a little late. Mrs Gandhi herself said, 'Aap andar kyon aa rahe hain, aap rukhiye bahar zara. Aapko kuch kahna hai to baad mein kahniye' (Why are you coming inside, there is a meeting going on. If you have anything to say, tell

me, afterwards)". Then I quietly whispered to her, "I think he has been appointed as a special invitee to the CPB. I haven't seen any order from you, but I saw it in the Press." Then Mrs Gandhi told him, "Accha, accha, baithiye (Okay, okay, sit down)." I made discreet enquiries about the appointment and found out that Mr Sanjay Gandhi had told Mr Antulay that he should be made a special invitee. Mrs Gandhi knew nothing about it. Then, look at the manner in which the Ministers are taking instructions from Mr Sanjay Gandhi, or the two secretaries of the Congress (I), Mr Buta Singh and Mr Antulay, take orders from him.

Q: Are you suggesting that what happened during the Emergency is happening again?

A: I am saying that what happened during the Emergency was bad enough. What is happening now is the beginning of a bad type of situation unless it is checked. I think my resignation may shake Mrs Gandhi. I hope Mrs Gandhi will wake up and realise the situation before it is too late for her to correct it.

Q: Do you really think that your resignation will shake her?

A: I hope so. Shake means make her realise that there are people who can raise their voice. Perhaps she was taking everybody for granted, she will not do that now. I hope that some respectability will revert back to the Congress leaders.

Q: Do you think that the move you have made will have a snowball effect among the Congress leadership?

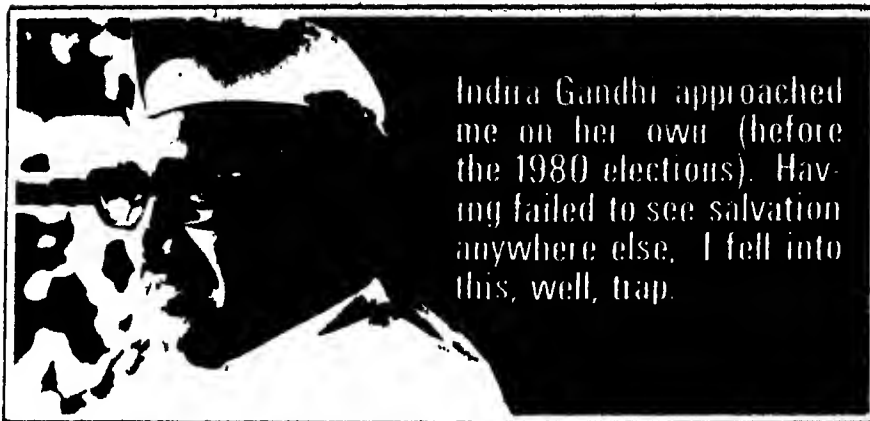
A: That I can't say. Rank and file, yes. I have already received telegrams, letters from almost every district of UP. Leading Congress (I) people now say that they would like to strengthen my hands. I haven't counted, but yesterday (the day Bahuguna resigned) alone about 300 messages came. I have been receiving telephone calls from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, saying, 'Thank you very much. Nobody could have done this. This is a new chapter you are adding to Parliamentary procedure.'

Q: YOU have made another serious allegation that smugglers, hijackers have been given Congress (I) tickets in the Assembly polls. Would you care to substantiate this?

A: Well, Mrs Gandhi, in her reply to me, has not said no to this charge.

Q: Would you like to identify anyone?

A: I would not like to name people. It's not fair, but who does not know who the hijackers are? Who does not know who the smugglers are? People know it. People who were arrested under COFEPOSA, two of them in UP, a person who is a leading smuggler in Bihar and has many cases and convictions to his credit, has been given the Congress (I) ticket. You know what COFEPOSA means? It means that the Government of India, not the state government, is suggesting detention.



Indira Gandhi approached me on her own (before the 1980 elections). Having failed to see salvation anywhere else, I fell into this, well, trap.

Q: You are suggesting that loyalty overrides all other considerations.

A: Personal, personal, it's all personal. They want the whole apparatus of state to be run as a personal business.

Q: Can you effectively challenge Mrs Gandhi by remaining outside all Parties?

A: Certainly. I need not join a political Party. But an apparatus will emerge, and I am more than sure that Congressmen—I have great faith in Congressmen—will rise to the occasion.

Q: Will your friend, the Shohi Imam, campaign against the Congress (I) in this Assembly elections?

A: Once again I will say that we have not done it for the marginal purpose of a few seats in the Assembly elections. Otherwise I would have resigned earlier and started campaigning long back.

Q: How, do you see the future of the nation?

A: The eighties are going to be a very, very difficult period. The economic situation is going to be difficult, the north-east is already in the doldrums, the internal administrative machine is passing through the worst phase in its life. The apparatus of state is already being damaged. In view of the drought, the high price of energy, the international tensions, the spread of armaments and the movement of large fleets and armies, all this is going to cause a very difficult time ahead. It will require political genius to meet the challenge of the times. I am afraid that the present outfit with which Mrs Gandhi wants to manage the affairs of state is too poor to foot the bill. It requires a great deal of comprehension, understanding, goodwill, and, above all, objectivity, which is totally lacking. I wish well of Mrs Gandhi, maybe she will change. But unless she changes I see grave times. There will be social tensions, economic tensions. Aren't you seeing the growing number of atrocities on Harijans everywhere? Just recently in UP, in Almora and Hathras, we have seen this. Every day this is happening in spite of Mrs Gandhi's claim that her government believes in the protection of the weak. Now, how long can she say that the Janata had spoilt things? Well, that's why she came, because the Janata had spoilt things. I am not boasting; but I became Chief Minister of UP and within a

fortnight a change was visible to everybody. You can ask the administrators, you can ask the common man whether or not a change was visible. How long can we continue in this darkness, and bear that in the last three years the Janata ruined everything? Is it that the work of 30 years before the Janata came was so fragile that the whole thing collapsed in three years? And even if it was broken in three years, why couldn't it be rebuilt in three weeks? We could have started so many things. For instance, a national wage structure for teachers: a committee could have been set up to go into this. This is only one small example. But nothing was started. How much time does Mrs Gandhi need? How much is she asking for? This country will hardly give ten months.

Q: How long do you think Mrs Gandhi will last?

A: You can see my interview given to Hindustan in mid-January. I said, 100 days will prove whether or not this government has acquired a sense of direction and purpose. I am sorry to say that I have come to the conclusion that this government has no (direction or purpose). There will be trouble for Mrs Gandhi if she does not sort out things within a year. I will tell you something. Before the Shohi Imam agreed to campaign for Mrs Gandhi during the last elections, he took it in writing from me that if something was not done within 100 days, he would leave. I wish Mrs Gandhi well, she is the Prime Minister of the country. I wish her government a sense of direction, the healing touch this country needs it.

Q: Do you think that if Mrs Gandhi gets enough legislators in the Rajya Sabha she will try to change the Constitution?

A: I don't know. She is becoming very unpredictable.

Q: Unpredictable?

A: She is only doing what suits her in the short term. Subjectivity is the primary consideration. Personal outlook, personal gains, personal loss (no commitment) to any cause, not to any ideas.

Q: Loyalty also to Sanjay Gandhi?

A: They have become inseparable now. The mother means the son, and the son means the mother.

Q: Will you contest the seat you have just resigned, when the election comes around?

A: Wait and see.

Can anyone stop the Congress(I)?

By M. J. AKBAR



Mrs Gandhi in Rajiv Lochan temple of Raipur district with V. C. Shukla.

TWENTY-three kilometers to the west of Lucknow is Malihabad, a small town which has played a disproportionately large role in the history and culture of Awadh. Burqa-clad women and fair faced men with bristling martial moustaches, indicate the character of this town. This is Pathan territory, prosperous fields, gardens of the delicious kalam mango, and this land has provided the commanders and soldiers to a succession of armies. (The Hindi film *Junoon* was partly shot in one of the oldest *havelis* of Malihabad and some of the elderly family women were upset that in a house where once tigers roared, the sounds of dancers—*nachaniyas*—was now being heard.) Baijnath Kureel, a senior and respected member of the Congress (I), is contesting from here and his victory is considered all but certain. Apart from the personal respect which Mr Kureel commands, the fact that his main opponent is from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is enough to remove any doubt among the Muslims about whom they should vote for. For them this is a classic Congress constituency represented by a national Congressman.

The only surprise in the Assembly election of 1980 is why all the Congress (I) candidates in UP cannot be as sanguine as Mr Kureel is about his victory. The opposition, which seemed crushed by late April

has suddenly revived by the last week of the campaign. Why isn't Mrs Gandhi getting a two-thirds majority in all the nine states which are going to the polls? Why have doubts begun to arise particularly about four states—UP, Punjab, Orissa and Tamil Nadu? It is hard to believe that Mrs Gandhi will not win, but even Congress (I) campaign managers are not as confident as they were when the nominations were being filed.

This is the Summer of Apathy. There is a marked disillusionment among the people, particularly since so much was expected of 'The Hope of 1980' after the despair of the Janata. For the people, all that seems to have happened after the return of Mrs Gandhi is that prices have continued to go up while the administration has continued to dither.

The size of all political meetings including Mrs Gandhi's has been astonishingly small. The blazing summer sun was not enough reason for the poor crowds. Only in the last phase of electioneering was something akin to excitement visible. Tamil Nadu perhaps has been the most active: loudspeakers have been blaring out songs pregnant with political hints and films with blatant political messages have been showing on Madras screens for most of May. When Mrs Gandhi began her month-long election tour from the 'safe'

state of Madhya Pradesh, both Congress and opposition leaders were astonished by the poor response she got. In fact, it was this more than anything else which put heart into a broken and disintegrating opposition. Coupled with this was the obvious anger among vast numbers of Congressmen over the distribution of tickets. A whole new class of legislators was being created and the traditional Congressmen, who formed the backbone of the Party, suddenly found themselves with nothing in hand and nothing to look forward to. Mr H. N. Bahuguna was only the most striking example of a widespread phenomenon within the Congress (I). And the Congress (I) also realised that it would have to begin paying the price of being a ruling Party. Congressmen were regretting towards the end of May that President's Rule had been imposed. They no longer had any clear targets; there was no longer a Banarasi Das in UP or a Ram Sundar Das in Bihar or an MGR in Tamil Nadu to blame for all the states' ills—drought relief, price rise, diesel shortage, law and order. Instead there was a Governor and an administration which the people clearly identified with the Congress (I).

Of course the ruling Party benefited from President's Rule, particularly through reorganisation of the state machinery. UP has seen thousands of transfers of everyone from constables to gazetted officers in a government effort to make the administration more pliable to the Congress (I) needs. And during the elections the help of the administration can be invaluable for any Party. The Governor of Uttar Pradesh has even gone on record with an astonishingly partisan statement in favour of the Congress (I). He said that he had doubts about whether a viable coalition government (which is the very best that the opposition can hope for) could be formed. In Punjab the stories of Garcha, the unfortunate MP involved in the Poor-nima case, were making the rounds and being exploited by the Akalis. They had even created a slogan out of this: "*Congress ki yehi pahchan; Bagal mein larki, haath mein jaam*" (This is how you recognise the Congress—a woman beside you and bottle in hand!).

But the most effective weapon in the hands of the opposition remained prices, which was hardly surprising. Mrs Gandhi's victory was partly due to rising prices, and people expected her to control them. Instead, sugar disappeared during the crucial marriage season. The verse with which the Lok Dal wooed the women in the north was "*Maar gaya mahan-gai. Bahena; Bik gaya mera saara gahana; Ab mat sun Indiraka kahena*" (Rising prices has killed my sister; All my jewellery has been sold; Don't listen to Indira anymore). In Maharashtra a Congress MP found that the audience which would wait for hours

during the last campaign were melting away in 15 minutes.

If one were asked to name the safest state for Mrs Gandhi one would have to name Gujarat. The Congress (I) should gain comfortable victories in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (although Nanaji Deshmukh insisted to this writer that the BJP would win in MP). One state in which Mrs Gandhi should do better than conventionally expected is Bihar. Not only has the choice of the Congress (I) candidates been comparatively less controversial but the opposition is genuinely divided. In theory the total opposition is divided into nine or ten groups but in

practice this is hardly the case. In Punjab, the fight is between Congress (I) and the Akali-CPI-CPI (M) alliance with the BJP being a factor only in a few constituencies and nobody else making any significant difference. In Maharashtra, it is again a triangular contest with the Congress (I), the Congress (U), the BJP and the Janata Party making different triangles in different constituencies. And so on. Even in UP, apart from the 80 odd seats where the BJP has a presence, the contest is a straight one between the Congress (I) and the Lok Dal. No one disputes the fact that not only is the Lok Dal an important force in UP but it is going to do much better

than the forecasts of many commentators would indicate. But in Bihar, not only is the opposition split but each splinter has its own following.

Let us compare the opposition in UP and Bihar. In UP neither the Congress (U) nor the CPI can make any real difference but in Bihar the CPI is strong enough for the joke to gain currency that the CPI should be renamed the CPB (Communist Party of Bihar). Similarly the Congress (U) under Ram Lakhan Yadav cannot be sneezed at. After all the Party has four MPs with important regional leaders like Abdul Gafoor and Dharam Bir Sinha. While the Lok Dal is a credible force in UP and can, with some legitimacy, claim to be the nucleus around which the opposition can form a coalition, the Lok Dal in Bihar can hardly make such a claim. Its individual strength, will in fact be genuinely tested in this election. The Janata Party is dead in UP but in Bihar, Satyendra Narain Singh has not yet allowed it to die. Lastly there is no H. N. Bahuguna in Bihar. Bihar is so confused that it is difficult to see the only Party which can promise an uncomplicated Government, the Congress (I) losing, despite the last minute efforts at unity by the Lok Dal, Janata and Congress (U). Indeed, if the Congress (I) loses in Bihar its fortunes will have declined at an unheard of pace. In Tamil Nadu the traditional enemies are once again in battle. It is clear that MGR, with the sympathy emanating from his martyrdom after the dismissal of his Government, has the largest single vote. But is his following strong enough in electoral terms to challenge and defeat the combined vote of the Congress(I) and the DMK? According to one Congress (I) theorist MGR might walk off with as much as 40 per cent of the votes but he will lose the battle for seats as the 25 per cent of the Congress (I) votes added to the 25 per cent DMK votes will give the alliance a clear lead. Soon enough we will see which theories were valid.

The opposition in Orissa bases its confidence on history. In the elections of 1971 the people of Orissa on the same day at the same general election gave Mrs Gandhi a handsome majority in the Lok Sabha but simultaneously defeated her in the Assembly polls. Both Biju Patnaik and Nandini Satpathy are contesting in the Assembly elections and projecting themselves as future CMs. Are they finished or can they still convert their personalities into state-level votes? And just in case there is no clear majority for the Congress(I), will Nandini Satpathy take her band of MLAs and lead a Congress (I) Ministry? Of course, there might in the end be no need to answer most of these questions. The Congress(I) could form Governments without any help everywhere. Certainly one month ago nobody expected the opposition to prevent a clean sweep by Mrs Gandhi. The only news is that it might be unwise to declare victory before the returning officers, in the hundreds of constituencies, officially announce the results.

Can he tilt the U.P. balance?

Bahar chahe to ley jaaye ham se rang-e-hayat

Hamara khoom-e-jigar hai har ik chaman ke liye.

(Urdu couplet on a board outside the entrance to Mr H. N. Bahuguna's house in Delhi)

S EVEN p.m., May 23, Kanpur. A stage has been erected at one intersection of a busy chowk, and a huge larger-than-life plywood cutout of a striding Bahuguna dominates the scene. A large crowd is waiting in silence. By seven thirty, the star of the evening comes: he is literally carried onto the stage on the shoulders of enthusiastic admirers. H. N. Bahuguna has come to explain to the people of Kanpur why he left the Party he had joined six months ago. And the crux of his message was: vote for whoever you like, but don't vote for Mrs Gandhi. The people listened with rapt attention. We will only know by June 1 whether his message has made its impact on the people or not: after all, Bahuguna's appeal had one drawback; he had no specific Party to offer as an alternative to the Congress (I).

A city like Kanpur, with a strong Muslim population, and a large working class, is a good place to test the impact that Bahuguna can make on the coming Assembly polls in UP. His support is largely among Muslims, the people of the hill areas, and sections of the urban population. But in a situation where the gap between the Congress (I) vote and the opposition (led by Chaudhary Charan Singh's Lok Dal) vote in a couple of percentage points, any shift in the voting could mean the difference between a narrow victory and a narrow defeat.

The 1974 Assembly elections in UP are still remembered with a variety of emotions, ranging from awe to disgust. The Congress was in poor shape, but Chief Minister Bahuguna was in charge of the Party's campaign. In what is con-

sidered a miracle of many kinds, Bahuguna managed to get the Congress 213 seats — less than a majority, but enough to form a government with a handful of defectors. Can Bahuguna do for the opposition what it did for the ruling Party in 1974 — that is, tip the nearly balanced scales?

There is no doubt about one thing: Bahuguna's bitterness against the Congress (I). On May 21, he began his campaign against Mrs Gandhi from a town which is called home by both Bahuguna and Mrs Gandhi: Allahabad. He then went to Lucknow, where he addressed a meeting on the evening of May 21 — the same evening Mrs Gandhi held two roadside meetings in the city (this was the first time she was holding street-corner meetings in Lucknow; on every previous occasion she addressed the crowds at more spacious locations). Bahuguna then moved to Kanpur, and from there, via Delhi to Garhwal, from where he won the seat in Parliament. After Garhwal, he would return to the plains, and finally end his efforts with a last meeting in Patna. But will this be sufficient?

Mr Bahuguna may have changed sides four times in the last four years, but there has been one element of consistency in all this — each time, he has ended up on the winning side, whether the odds seemed stacked for him or against him. Has he joined the winning side again? It might not seem so at the moment. But it would be foolish to underestimate him. His secretary, Rahman, told me that he intended to put up another couplet on the door, along with the one quoted at the beginning when Bahuguna moves on to his next, non-ministerial, house in Delhi. This couplet will go like this:

*Kuch aur bhi ham meri zindagi ki tasweerein
Main woh nahin jo mere doston ne samjha hai.*

M. J AKBAR

The birth of a new lobby

MR Bahl is an affluent restaurateur and runs one of the best eating houses in south Bombay. He is contesting the elections as the Congress (I) candidate from the Colaba constituency. Mr Bahl represents the new lobby that 1, Safdarjung Road wants to strengthen in Bombay, the Mecca of money, the treasure island of the country's political money-hunters. In the last few years the business community though primarily siding with the Congress (I), had become an unreliable ally. In fact, in 1977 business houses were divided, with the Marwaris financing the Congress (I) and the more traditional business houses siding with the right-wing Parties. This was accentuated by the victory of the Janata in 1977, and continued in the 1980 Parliamentary elections. When business men realised that the Janata's days were numbered, they hedged their bets. While their predilections remained basically where they were, they went out of their way to contribute to the Congress (I) coffers.

Since businessmen have become unreliable, most of them being fair-weather friends, 1, Safdarjung Road has clearly decided on a lobby of its own, namely the hotel and tourism lobby. This is where Mr Bahl becomes very important.

The hotel lobby has always been pampered by the government. In fact, Mr Oberoi got his second tower sanctioned in Bombay only through the influence of the Congress (I) in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It is said that during the Emergency, there was a proposal to bring down prices of eatables by 12.5 per cent in the hotels. It was put to practice in all the grade two and grade three hotels and restaurants, but the five star hotels refused to toe the line. They lobbied ceaselessly to be kept out of the purview of the 12.5 per cent cut, and reportedly succeeded after donating the proceeds of three days' sales to the Chief Minister's fund and the Prime Minister's fund. While the hotel lobby is in a position to render enormous favours, from rooms to food, it is also a milch cow. How useful it is to have the hotel lobby on one's side becomes obvious when one reads how the political lobby, whether for tickets or change of Chief Ministers, meets in hotel suites. In Bombay, suites at the Ritz and the Nataraj serve as shamanas for the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress variety of politicians. The Taj suite is used by the likes of Mr Devaraj Urs and

Rajni Patel. As a fund collection source it is a bottomless treasury. For instance, it is said that the Sharad Pawar Cabinet had taken a decision to restrict the distribution of licences for new bars in the city and suburbs. But according to several hoteliers, these licences could be had for Rs two lakhs and there were about 20 licences given during Mr Pawar's regime.

The coming days will see the hotel lobby growing stronger under the patronage of the Congress (I) which is expected to sweep the polls in Maharashtra. Mr Bahl's main rival is former MLA Ranjit Bhanu of the Janata (JP) and the other is the BJP's Harish Jagtiani, son-in-law of the top tax consultant. Mr Bahl is supported ironically by another Janata restaurateur Mr Manmohan Singh Bedi who probably has the country's one and only 300-seater restaurant in Bombay. One can see



Vasantdada Patil

how Party interests take a back seat when property interests are at stake. Mr Bhanu is depending on the votes of the hotel workers who number about 15,000 in the Colaba constituency.

The sugar lobby will be fighting an interesting battle in Mr Sharad Pawar's constituency, Baramati. His Congress (I) rival is Mr Vinayakrao Chopade, who belongs to the shepherd community. Chairman of the Meera Cooperative Sugar Factory, Mr Chopade has not only the support of the sitting MP, Mr Shankar Rao Patil, who won by 17,000 votes in this Assembly Constituency but also the support of the Janata sugar baron Mr Sambhajirao Kakade. Mr Kakade is a bitter rival of Mr Pawar and added to his many grouses against Mr Pawar is the fact that the latter supported Mr Mohan Dharla from the Baramati parliamentary constituency in the last parliamentary elections against Mr Kakade who was the Janata candidate.

OLGA TELLIS, Bombay

Dry Gujarat's days are numbered

PERSPECTIVE of Party labels. A dry laws have always been followed religiously in Gujarat, one of the last bastions of the policy of total prohibition. But the spell is breaking now, with the Congress (I) tribal leader, Mr Jhina-bhai Doshi, openly championing liberalisation. Never before in the home state of the puritanical Prime Minister Morarji Deasai, has it been a poll issue. Even now other Congress (I) leaders, including Mr Madhavsinh Solanki, aspirant to Chief Ministership, are uneasy about publicly declaring the prohibition policy that they will follow if the Party is returned to power. Privately, most leaders confess that strict prohibition laws have failed. This is constantly underscored by the recurring tragedies caused by illicit and poisonous liquor drinking by the poor.

Absentminded to a fault, Gujaratis have been in the past quarter century raised on the belief that drinking was bad, not only for one's health but also for one's soul. So that while lone voices of dissent were heard here and there, none dared to make it a political issue — not even the daredevil politician, Chimanbhai Patel!

Jhina-bhai, hailing from the tribal belt of south Gujarat from where Mrs Gandhi set off on a political comeback trail, is a sort of maverick in Gujarat politics. He is credited with the political theory that the Congress (I) needed the backing only of the poor — comprising Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims (KHAM) to make a clean sweep. He now wants prohibition to be liberalised, and though his colleagues are fighting shy of saying it openly, in the event of the Congress (I) coming to power, Gujarat will soon have a relaxed policy, more or less on the lines of Maharashtra.

The dry laws have been in force for a long time in the state and no one knows for sure how much the exchequer is losing in revenue. It could be anywhere between Rs. 10 and 30 crores. Way back in 1969, the Gandhi centenary year, the state Government had asked economists at the prestigious Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research to look at the economic impact of prohibition on the slumdweller in Ahmedabad. Their finding was that it has had no impact on their poverty. The report incidentally has never been published.

TUSHAR BHATT, Ahmedabad

MGR without an answer



MGR is a little sore that his political film *Idudhan en Badil* (This is my answer) may not be completed before the elections. But the songs from the film are being used everywhere. Songs which praise Annadurai's sagacity, extol his humanity and bemoan the betrayers who discredited Anna (for betrayers read Messrs Karunanidhi and company).

If the DMK was the first to launch the poll campaign, its rival AIADMK was not far behind. The DMK is contesting 110 seats in conjunction with its ally the Congress (I) which is also contesting

110 seats. The AIADMK is contesting 172 seats and the remaining 62 seats are being shared between the two Communist Parties, the Gandhi Kamraj National Congress, the Lok Dal and the Congress. There is jubilation in the DMK camp that Mrs Gandhi has confirmed that Karunanidhi will indeed become the next Chief Minister if their "progressive alliance" wins in the election. But senior DMK leaders are apprehensive about the outcome of the elections because they know that Karunanidhi does not today have the same charisma that he possessed in 1971. And since the DMK is

contesting only 109 seats, Karunanidhi's dependence on the Congress (I) is inevitable.

But MGR is not worried. In fact, he is convinced of his personal charisma. Of late the rural masses have flocked to listen to him. Naturally he has been thinking about victory: "If we win a majority and form a Government, we won't mind working in cooperation with Mrs Gandhi at the Centre. The January election (to the Lok Sabha) was more of a vote for Mrs Gandhi to establish a stable Government at the Centre. The May state Assembly election will be a vote for a stable and corruption-free Government at the state level and surely the people will choose the AIADMK and its allies." Though MGR's Tamil is no match for Karunanidhi's hard-hitting alliterative prose, he has nevertheless managed to muster a group of writers who have come out with carping criticism of the DMK leader. Very little criticism, however, has been directed against Mrs Gandhi. When MGR's electoral partners like the CPI (M) and the CPI criticise Mrs Gandhi, the film actor-politician is quite embarrassed. This has had an effect. The CPI (M) leader, P. Ramamurthy, has recently remarked that his Party's support to MGR is not unconditional and may not last forever.

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

Disqualified by luck

THE withdrawal of one candidate from 1,400 makes no headline news. But the matter was different in Ladnun constituency of Rajasthan. When the returning officer of Ladnun Assembly constituency, after the publication of the list of withdrawals, started allotting symbols to candidates, Deepankar who had filed his nomination papers as the Congress(I) candidate was surprised to find that he had not been allotted the hand symbol. He was informed that he would not be given the symbol since he had already withdrawn from the election. But Deepankar would not agree since he "had withdrawn only one of the two nomination papers filed by him". The returning officer insisted that the rules provided only for withdrawal of candidature and not of nomination paper. Thus Deepankar was no longer an eligible candidate. So the question of allotment of any symbol to him did not arise. The officer also added that the list of withdrawals, which contained Deepankar's name, had already been published to which no one had

raised any objection, not even Deepankar himself.

This caused a flutter in the Congress(I) camp. Deepankar and others made a desperate bid to have the mistake remedied but the returning officer would not budge. When the news reached the state election department in Jaipur, there was all-round panic. After all, it concerned a candidate of the ruling Party. Immediately, a high official from the election department talked to the returning officer on the phone. The official advised that the intention behind Deepankar's withdrawal of one set of nomination papers did not mean that he was withdrawing his candidature. The returning officer quoting rules pleaded his helplessness since he could not heed the advice which was contrary to law. A meeting of high officials of the election department followed and later on the district election officer was asked to stop printing of ballot papers till the matter was finally settled. The printing of ballot papers is generally started immediately after the symbols are allotted. The

postal ballots are also despatched within 48 hours of the allotment of symbols. When the district electoral officer drew the officer's attention to this, he was told that since the rule under question was only an executive order it was not binding and could be done away with.

Subsequently, the relevant papers were called for from Jaipur. Apparently, not satisfied with the papers, the chief electoral officer summoned the returning officer to Jaipur with the original papers for a thorough scrutiny by the departmental authorities. Meanwhile, the election commission also asked for the necessary papers. However, attempts to reach the withdrawn ultimately proved abortive. In the confused situation the postal ballots could not be despatched till three days after the election.

The extraordinary situation shown by the chief electoral officer in Jaipur to save the Congress (I) nominee has attracted criticism. According to legal experts, any decision taken by the returning officer can be challenged only through an election petition and that too after the results.

MILAPCHAND DARDIA, Jaipur

Caste feud over new Bihar CM

THE latest election joke doing the rounds in Patna is that Sanjay Gandhi is contesting the Assembly elections from the city itself. How? All the four seats in Patna city have been allotted to unknown Sanjayites. This has only heightened the underlying tensions between the Rajputs and the Brahmins who are vying with each other to curry favour with either Mrs Gandhi or her son. The Congress(I) in the state has been divided into warring camps.

The question uppermost in everybody's mind is: if the Congress(I) comes to power, who will be the next Chief Minister? If a choice is to be made from within the state, Dr. Jagannath Mishra, the Emergency Chief Minister and the Legislature Party chief appears to be the most likely candidate. He is believed to be in the good books of both Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi and has thus acquired for his supporters the lion's share of Party tickets. Not only was his opinion sought by the Prime Minister during the removal of the Janata appointed Chief Secretary, Mr L. Dayal, he also succeeded in persuading Mrs Gandhi to retain the present inspector-general of Police, Mr S. K. Chatterjee in favour of Mr Fazal Ahmad, a replacement suggested by the Rajput lobby within the Congress(I). Dr. Mishra's main rival appears to be Mr Kedar Pandey, the Bihar PCC(I) president. The fact that Mr Pandey does not enjoy the confidence of Mr Sanjay Gandhi places him second in the running.

In the event of the mantle falling on the shoulder of a state politician now at the Centre, the best rated are Mr Sitaram Kesari and Mr Bhisma Narain Singh. It is at this point that the Brahmin and Rajput rivalry comes into promi-



Satyendra Narain Singh

nence. The Rajputs who support Mr Bhisma Narain Singh are trying to isolate the Brahmins. Meanwhile they are trying to win over Mr Sanjay Gandhi with the help of Mr Sanjay Singh, the Congress(I) leader from UP who is taking an avid interest in the affairs of Bihar. The objective of the Rajput camp is nature) to send as many of their own community to the Assembly as possible.

But it may be difficult for the Congress(I) to get the required number of seats to form a Government. That is what the opposition wants and has been waiting for. The opposition lobby headed by the Janata chief, Mr Satyendra Narain Singh, may join hands with the Rajput faction in the Congress(I) to put up a Rajput CM. If their strategy succeeds then the new Chief Minister might be Mr Bhisma Narain Singh. However, from the point of view of Mrs Gandhi Mr Singh's prospects do not appear to be very bright. He has already been relieved of his communication portfolio in favour of Mr. C. M. Stephen. His name has also been left out of the state drought relief committee. Mr Sitaram Kesari, on the other hand, is the man closest to Sanjay Gandhi in Bihar and was the only leader from the state to shape the final list of Bihar Congress(I) candidates. The fact that he belongs to the backward community may work in his favour.

If the pipe-dream of the opposition of forming a government comes true then they will have to unite to form a government. In that case the Janata chief, Mr Satyendra Narain Singh, MP, Mr Karpoori Thakur of the Lok Dal and Mr Ram Laxhan Singh Yadav of the Congress(U) will fight it out among themselves for the Chief Ministership. The three Party leaders failed to reach a poli accord because they could not sort out the question of Chief Ministership among themselves.

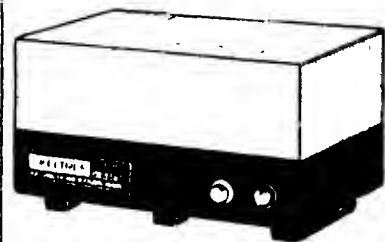
ARUN RANJAN, Patna

Dr Jagannath Mishra



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Mother and son

In the Madhya Bharat region of MP royalty still sways the masses and what better way to reflect current political realities than for partisan politics to enter and split the Scindia royal family. Rajmata Vijaya Raje leads the Bharatiya Janata Party campaign while son Madhavrao is in the Congress(I). AJOY BOSE spoke to both

"He deserted me when I needed him most"

Mrs Vijaya Raje Scindia, Rajmata of Gwalior, is undeterred by her ignominious defeat in the last Lok Sabha elections. She is campaigning furiously in Madhya Pradesh for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Among her major political opponents in the State is her own son Madhavrao Scindia, who is campaigning for the Congress(I).



Q: What does it feel like, having your son as your main political opponent in the state?

A: What can I do? He does not listen to me any more. He thinks he is being very clever. Once Mrs Gandhi gives him a few slaps, he will learn. Then he will come back to me.

Q: Your son says that he has joined the Indira Congress because he considers Mrs Gandhi the most progressive force in the country. Please comment.

A: It's just the opposite. Mrs Gandhi is not progressive. She is just the opposite. Does he consider the Emergency progressive? She is a dictator of the worst kind. How can my son say that she is progressive?

Q: Has your personal relationship with your son deteriorated ever since he joined the Congress?

A: I am not a hypocrite. I can say that our relationship remains cordial. Naturally it has deteriorated. How can it remain the same after he has done such a thing to me?

Q: Your son is very hurt that while he has not criticised you in public, you have done so.

A: He is hurt! Has he ever stopped to think how I feel? At the time I needed him most, he deserted me. Children never stop to consider the feelings of their parents. They only think of their own feelings. How can I avoid criticising him if he is my main political opponent in the state? It's just not possible.

Q: Do you think that a divided Scindia family is going to affect the Assembly elections?

A: It will to a certain extent, definitely. But at every public meeting, I try to explain why the division took place. I am sure that the people will be convinced and vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Q: But they did not during the mid-term polls.

A: These last four months have proved that Mrs Gandhi is not able to do anything but make empty promises. I think that the people have learned a lesson and will not vote for her again.

Q: Do you feel that Bharatiya Janata Party is more coherent than the old Janata Party?

A: Oh yes. Now we are of the same ideology. It is like (the situation) in 1967 when I was in the Jana Sangh. We all think the same way so it is much easier to function.

Q: What do you think are the election prospects in Madhya Pradesh?

A: It will be a tough fight but I think we will ultimately triumph.

"I will accept whatever Mrs Gandhi decides"

Although he joined the Congress(I) only a few months back, Madhavrao Scindia in his short career in the Party has already overshadowed old Congress heavyweights in the State like P. C. Sethi and V. C. Shukla. For instance, in the coming State Assembly elections, his candidates have got precedence particularly in the Gwalior division over most other State leaders. Young and dapper, the Oxford-educated 36-year-old ex-Maharaja has been travelling in an imported helicopter over the rugged terrain of the Gwalior division to garner support for the Congress(I) in the Assembly elections.

Q: The Scindia family has always had a decisive influence over Assembly elections in the Gwalior division. Now, for the first time, the house of Scindia is divided. Do you think your mother's opposition to you will pose a serious challenge to the election prospects of the Indira Congress in this region?

A: Firstly, I don't think old feudal glory is enough to win the support of people anymore. My mother may have that illusion. I don't. What people are bothered about today is getting things done. And I think I can claim with some pride that I have got a number of things done for this region including a number of agricultural and industrial projects in just the last three months.

Q: But surely you are taking advantage of being the former maharaja of the area?

A: There is no doubt that my family background gives me an advantage. I am also proud of the Scindia tradition. But, I personally would like to detach myself as much possible from my family and be recognised for my own merits.

Q: Don't you find it difficult to explain why you have joined a Party which was directly responsible for



Madhav Rao Scindia before his helicopter, Gwalior palace in the background

sending your own mother to jail?

A: The point here is to not see one's political attitudes on a purely personal level. I don't agree with the arrest of my mother during the Emergency. But I don't think that makes it impossible to be with the Congress Party. I think that Mrs Gandhi is the main progressive force in the country and I think she is the only person who can solve the many problems facing India. Whatever may have happened to me personally or to my family is subsidiary to this. And I am not the only one. There are many like me. For instance I know of this loyal Congress worker in Gwalior who spent the whole 19 months of the Emergency behind bars. There was obviously some stupid mistake. But he is still with Mrs Gandhi. I think it is the people who cringed and bowed during the Emergency and wrote letters of apology to the government are the ones who are now opposing Mrs Gandhi. It was a difficult decision for me to join the Congress Party but I know I have done right to see things politically first and then personally.

Q: Your mother has been very bitter about your joining the Indira Congress. Has your personal relationship deteriorated with her after you became her political opponent?

A: As far as I am concerned, I don't see why different political beliefs should influence personal relations. That is why I have never criticised my mother on a public platform. She on the other hand, at every public meeting, comes out personally against me. In the last mid-term polls, I deliberately avoided going to Rae Bareilly and campaigning. My mother spent one full day in my constituency abusing me. This in spite of the fact I had earlier told her that we should avoid each other's constituencies. Anyway, even in these Assembly elections, I won't talk about her. Let her talk against me. It is her wish.

Q: Coming to the bitterness you have caused inside the Congress (I) in Madhya Pradesh, there are a number of old Congress leaders and workers who allege that you have been overnight given precedence over them particularly in the matter of distribution of Assembly seat tickets?

A: There is bound to be some heartburn after the distribution of election tickets. Some people will have to be rejected and they will naturally resent it. I think tempers will cool down soon and they will learn to accept the Party leadership's decision.

Q: But there is a rebel Congress candidate in almost every constituency in the Gwalior and Chambal divisions.

A: It's unfortunate that this has happened. I am travelling all over and trying to explain that Congressmen should remain united and fight the opposition. I think I will succeed.

Q: People are also charging you with giving a large number of tickets to your own staff or as they describe it mahal kae chamche?

A: You must have heard this from opposition politicians.

Q: No, ordinary people told me this.

A: Then they must have been misled. The only staff member of mine who has been given a ticket is Mahendra Singh. But he too is a former MLA. I think all this talk of mahal kae chamche is just propaganda by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Q: According to what the people say, you have been given as many as 20 tickets out of 34 in this division, out of which eight have gone to your own staff members?

A: I wish it were true. I have got only nine tickets out of 34; with the exception of Mahendra Singh, none are my staff members.

Q: Do you think this feeling among the people is likely to erode your chances in the Assembly elections?

A: Well, to a certain extent, it will but I hope to convince the people to vote for us.

Q: So you think it will be smooth sailing for you in the Assembly elections?

A: No, no. In the Gwalior and Chambal divisions, it will be a tough fight. This is the main citadel of the opposition forces in the state. In the 1977 Assembly elections, the Congress won only two out of 34 seats, one by 86 votes and the other by 2,000 votes. But in spite of this, I am confident we will win.

Q: Most people who had joined the Congress just before the mid-term polls have been relegated to secondary positions by Mrs Gandhi. How have you been the exception?

A: Well that's a difficult question to answer. But all I can say is that Mrs Gandhi must have been convinced of my sincerity for doing something for this region.

Q: Some people say that you are strongly tipped to be the next Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Will you accept the Chief Ministership?

A: I will accept whatever Mrs Gandhi decides.

Q: You say that you want to move away from old feudal traditions. How do you then tolerate people touching your feet all the time as the maharaja?

A: You know, it is a difficult thing to break old feudal norms and loyalties. I feel distinctly uncomfortable when people touch my feet but if I tell them not to, they will consider it an affront because they think it is traditional. One should make the transition slowly, not hurriedly. I am trying slowly to get over this maharaja business. I know it will be difficult, but it can be done.

LIVING

Sham shaadi

How about getting foreign tourists to "participate" in an Indian wedding? This experiment was tried recently in the pink city of Jaipur and, according to Prakash Bhandari, worked famously with a group of French tourists. It was Denzil Coelho's idea; an Indian based in Paris, he was conducting the group on an Indian tour. Coelho decided that instead of witnessing a typical Rajasthani wedding with all its paraphernalia, the tourists should satisfy their curiosity by actually participating in one. He wrote to Udesha Sharma, the general manager of the hotel in Jaipur where the tourists were expected to stay, asking him to prepare for a "mock marriage". Taken aback, Sharma wrote to Coelho's employees in Bombay requesting them to confirm the contents of Coelho's letter. They did and half amused and half surprised, Sharma began preparing for the "marriage" like the conventional father of a Rajasthani bride. It was an unusual experience for Sharma, but he was determined to stage a grand performance. An elephant was engaged for the *dulha*, horses for the *baratis*.



Musicians were hired. A *mandap*, made of pure silver, was erected and the hotel's foyer was decorated with colourful bulbs and flowers. When the French tourists arrived, they were asked to select the bride and groom from among themselves. Maurice Avrillon was chosen as the groom; Mrs Simone Lambert as the bride. Neither Mrs Avrillon nor Mr Lambert—wife and husband of the "groom" and "bride" respectively—objected to the "marriage." The other tourists were to be

a part of the *barat*—the men dressed in *churidar* *pyjama*, *sherwani* and *safa* (turban) and the women in *lahenga* with *dopattas*. A local make-up man provided beards and moustaches for the men; the hotel beautician helped the women to dress for the occasion. An assistant manager of the hotel, Rajendra Goswami, was chosen to perform the *Kanyadan*. Though he looked younger than the bride, Mrs Lambert, Goswami agreed to play the part of her father.

The procession preceding the actual ceremony was a spectacle. Mr Avrillon, the groom, rode on the elephant like a Rajput prince, grinning from ear to ear. The *baratis* danced and sang to the music of the *shehnai*. Mr Lambert danced too, unperturbed by the fact that his wife was soon to be "married" to another man. Mrs Lambert played the part of a coy bride well enough except when, unable to resist the temptation, she ran up to the elephant and insisted on riding with the groom. Goswami, as her father, rose to the occasion and tried to dissuade her, but the bride was a rebel who eventually had her way. Once on the elephant, she threw convention to the winds and kissed the groom smack on his lips.

The *pheras* around the fire were conducted by two pundits while Coelho explained the various *mantras* to the tourists. After the "marriage" was solemnised, the bride, groom and *baratis* were treated to a colourful Rajasthani dance. The last word was Goswami's: he cautioned everyone—albeit lightheartedly—that no dowry had been involved.

County bounty

When Sunil Gavaskar signed for Somerset, not all his admirers in India were happy: the majority felt that county cricket was hardly his cup of tea. Amidst a great deal of scepticism, on May 9 this year, Gavaskar joined his Somerset colleagues who had already had two weeks of rigorous cricket in the Schweppes County Championships. The next day, with his skipper Brian Rose, he shattered yet another record in a 55-over Benson and Hedges match against Kent. Though Kent is no longer a formidable force on the county circuit, it still boasts of Asif Iqbal, Bob Woolmer, Derek Underwood and Chris Tavare. Gavaskar scored a chanceless 90 with 12 hits to the



fence while Brian Rose, at the other end, slammed an unbeaten 137—the last 36 runs with six mighty sixes. Somerset emerged triumphant but the tables were turned the very next day when the two counties played a 40-over John Player League game. Gavaskar scored 40 in roughly 46 minutes but Kent won by a 13-run margin. Then, on May 17, Gavaskar got his first county ton—123 against Middlesex, with three sixes and 12 fours. It was a display of immaculate batting, a blend of caution and ruthless aggression. Somerset lost the match by one run, but the Indian star was the hero of the day. It has been a good start for him this summer.

Capital punishment

So you're suffering from insomnia because mosquitoes are buzzing around your ears. Well, if you are a resident of Delhi you need not lose any sleep over it—literally, that is. Don't worry about any of those mosquito repellants and creams; just reach for the nearest telephone and dial the number 344284. Provided your telephone is in working order, you will get through to the central control room of the malaria department of the municipal corporation. Since the mosquito problem is grave in the capital, the department is meant to provide instant relief to harassed residents of the city.

The French disconnection



Jayanta Das

There was this recent incident when Rekha and Moushumi were both on the sets of *Daasi*. A French television crew

that was hovering around was focussing its camera lenses on Moushumi and virtually ignoring Rekha. The reason, it seems, was that someone had warned them about the star's temper, her tantrums and her recent boycott of the Press. Initially all went well but there soon came a stage in the proceedings when Rekha could take no more. She approached one of the members of the French team and said that they could film her while she was rehearsing. And she added by way of caution that they were on no account to disturb her while a shot was in progress. But nothing happened. The Frenchman failed to react and Rekha could not understand why he seemed to be paying no attention to her advice. Then some kind soul went up to the disappointed actress and explained that the Frenchman did not understand a word of English.

East Bengal's Ayatollah



Pranoy Chakraborty

P. K. Banerjee (back to camera)

While the team events during the Asian Table Tennis Championship progressed, one of the most conspicuous people in the Press box was East Bengal's football coach, P. K. Banerjee. One of the claims he made was that he could deal better with Muslims than Ayatollah Khomeini. And how exactly could he prove that, asked a listener. "The

people of his (Khomeini's) country speak only one language. But in my team alone, the Muslims speak in four different languages. Nasir Ahmad in Bengali, Habib and Latifuddin in Hyderabad Urdu, Najeed in Malayalam and the three Iranians, Majid, Jamshed and Khabbazi in Farsi. But in spite of that I've been able to tackle them."

If there had been a beauty contest among the women participants at the 11th Asian Table Tennis Championship which ended at Calcutta on May 18, the honours would have been cornered by three stunningly pretty sisters from Pakistan. With their bewitching looks and charming ways alone, Rubina Shakoor and her two sisters, Seema and Nazo won the hearts of everyone privi-

Thrice blessed

leged enough to enter the arena. Glad modestly in their traditional *salwar* and *kameez*, the three set many a heart aflutter. S. N. M. Abdi had the time of his life trying to meet them—separately; such was their demand. But it was worth it once they began talking. "Our Abbu (father), Syed Shakoor Ahmed played hoc-

key for India before Partition and our Anni (mother) is a good badminton player. We are six sisters. Three of them have got married but earlier on they were reasonably good table tennis players. The three of us have represented Pakistan in a number of international tournaments but we have never enjoyed ourselves as much

as we did in Calcutta", they said.

What did they like most about India? Cherubic Seema replied: "Oh, the *rasgollas* and *Indians*—I mean your hospitality and courtesy". Rubina, the eldest sister was enamoured of Banarasi saris of which she bought a few as gifts for people at home. Their favourite Indian actor? Amitabh Bachchan, of course! The best Indian movie they saw in Calcutta? *Khubsoorat*—"Rekha was really wonderful". Any complaints? "Yes", said Seema, Rubina and Nazo. "The *Bangla bandh* upset our sight-seeing programme. Can you believe that we are returning to Pakistan without really seeing anything besides your fabulous Park Hotel?" Nazo's favourite couplet: *Sare Jahan se achcha Hindustan hamara/Hum bulbulen hain iski, yeh gulsitan hamara*. (Our Hindusthan is better than the entire world. This country is a garden and we are its nightingales.) Oh, yes, nightingales the three certainly were. On May 19, the sisters flew home.



Jayanta Das

Rubina, Seema and Nazo Shakoor

Graveside summitry

At Tito's funeral, the leaders conferred



Mrs Gandhi lays a wreath in front of Tito's casket

ON May 8, thousands of mourners gathered solemnly at the Federal Assembly building, adjoining the Marx and Engels Square of Yugoslavia's capital Belgrade as eight military officers carried the pale oak coffin of Marshal Josip Broz Tito and placed it on an open gun carriage covered with the blue, red and white Yugoslav flag. In the distance could be heard the booming sound of cañons firing the 21 gun salutes. As the military band struck up the dirge, Yugoslav Air Force aircraft flew overhead and the jeep drawing the carriage, slowly moved forward. After about two hours the cortege reached the garden of Marshal Tito's estate overlooking Belgrade. The coffin was then placed in a white marble vault bearing a stark inscription: "Josip Broz Tito, 1892-1980". The body of the Croatian peasant's son was finally brought to rest in a garden he loved. Many cried as the cortege passed them and as the body was finally laid to rest. He had died three days before his eightyeighth birthday.

The funeral was one of the biggest gatherings of world leaders in history and was attended by 155 delegations which included four kings, 32 Heads of State, 20 Prime Ministers accompanied by 49 Foreign Ministers and a large number of high-ranking officials from more than 100 countries. But for the large number of leaders, the great gathering pre-

sented an unusual opportunity for private conversation without the buildup and expectations that precede more formal summits. In short, the scene was one of a hundred mini summits.

Seven hours and forty-five minutes after she had taken off from India, Mrs Indira Gandhi landed at Belgrade on May 7, to attend the funeral. As the door of the chartered Air India aircraft opened and Mrs Gandhi stepped out, she was received by the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia and escorted to the Belgrade Intercontinental Hotel, where she stayed during her visit. For that matter, leaders from all over the world who had come to pay their last respects to Tito, had been accommodated there. Only Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira decided to stay at their respective embassies.

Even before Tito's death, Mrs Gandhi had indicated to the Yugoslav leadership that she would attend the funeral. After Tito's death, once Mrs Gandhi's visit had been finalised, many leaders expressed their desire to meet her in Yugoslavia. Chairman Hua Guofeng of China, Leonid Brezhnev, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and, Zambian President Kaunda were some of them. The embassies of the respective countries made the preliminary arrangements and the details were worked out in

Belgrade. Mrs Gandhi on her part said she would like to meet Mrs Jovanka Tito, Marshal Tito's widow.

After checking into the hotel, Mrs Gandhi left immediately to meet the Yugoslav leadership. The meeting originally had been fixed for the morning of May 8, but had been postponed by the Yugoslav leaders. With this meeting began Mrs Gandhi's hectic schedule, in the course of which she would confer with some of the most prominent world leaders. At the huge presidential building she was received by President Lazar Koliševski, along with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. In a 70-minute meeting the leaders discussed the future of the Non-Aligned Movement after Tito, Brezhnev's discussion with the Yugoslav leaders and Afghanistan. Of particular importance was the discussion on the divisions within the non-aligned ranks. It was stressed that non-aligned countries should take the initiative in world affairs.

After that Mrs Gandhi returned to her hotel to meet Chancellor Schmidt of West Germany. Detente, fear of induction of arms to Pakistan, German fears of the USSR's missile programme and oil prices figured in the discussion. Mrs Gandhi initiated talks on the North-South dialogue while the German Chancellor pointed out that a general all-country discussion was of little use and that bilateral discussion would be more helpful.

The next day, she met Britain's Margaret Thatcher for breakfast. Since neither actually eats anything for breakfast they drank tea instead and discussed the domestic situation in India and Britain, as well as the situation in Afghanistan. At 10.00 am Mrs Gandhi met President Kaunda at the hotel but they decided to hold their discussions that night. After Kaunda left, she was informed that Lillian Carter had arrived so Mrs Gandhi personally escorted Mrs Carter back to her own room. It was of course an informal and personal meeting, where largely domestic matters were discussed.

BEFORE leaving for the Assembly Building to lay a wreath on Tito's coffin, she met Brezhnev and told the Soviet leader about the growing anxiety among non-aligned nations over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The talks lasted for 45 minutes and an Indian spokesman said, "Mr Brezhnev replied that he too was keen on a settlement and suggested that Afghanistan and Pakistan speak to each other. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was also present at the meeting. Mrs Gandhi insisted that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan was being used by the US to erode the non-aligned movement. Mr Brezhnev replied that the Soviet Union attached importance to the non-aligned movement and wanted India to play its role.

After the meeting Mrs Gandhi proceeded to the Assembly Building. Later in the day Mrs Gandhi met the Rumanian President, Ceausescu, and once again the non-aligned movement was discussed. She was then visited by Mrs Bandaranayake of Sri Lanka and she then called on Jovanka Tito and talked with her for about half an hour. Mrs Gandhi also met Mario Suarez and the Cuban Vice President.

The other important meeting she had that day was with Chairman Hua Guofeng of China. For the first time since Nehru met Chou En Lai in 1960, the leaders of the world's two most populous countries held a discussion. Both leaders desired the strengthening of relations between the two countries. Chairman Hua said that he wanted to see India as a strong nation and wanted her to play a greater role in the non-aligned movement. He called on Mrs Gandhi to forget the past and to look forward to the future. Mrs Gandhi said that though she wanted good relations between the two nations, it would not be at the cost of relations with other nations. Relations between the two countries will of course depend on the Indian approach to the problem in Aksai Chin, the remote area of North-East Kashmir retained by China after the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict. India insists on a settlement before relations are normalised, while China for the moment wants to shelve the issue.

The last meeting Mrs Gandhi had was an informal discussion with Kaunda, Nyerere and the President of Guinea. The discussion which began at 10 pm carried on until 12.15 am. The leaders discussed the problems facing the non-aligned movement, the way in which unpleasantness had been avoided at Havana and the non-aligned movement without Tito, who had provided the European link. Kaunda in fact, asked what would happen to the non-aligned movement now that all the founding fathers — Nasser, Nehru, Sukarno, and Tito — were no longer alive. It was decided that the non-aligned countries should take the initiative.

One issue which Mrs Gandhi discussed virtually with all leaders was the future of non-alignment after Tito. After all, Tito had lent great weight to the Non-Aligned Movement. It was at the Havana Summit that Tito decided to fight against the theory that non-aligned nations were natural allies of the Communist Bloc. Now with Tito, one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, gone the question which naturally arises is who will take over the leadership. And this perhaps was uppermost in the minds of leaders of the non-aligned nations, including Mrs Gandhi. It may not be possible for countries with Soviet leanings to play this role. Therefore, what remains to be seen is how far and for how long the Non-Aligned Movement stays clear of the power blocs and maintains its own independent identity.

SAUMITRA BANERJEE

Bride beheaded

The real culprit will get away

THIS is not fiction. Not even the proverbial triangular mix-up. It is a tragedy that befell a Hyderabad family on May 9 when a father butchered to death his 17-year-old daughter, Jagdamba, who was in her bridal attire. The father, Yelliah, who owned a garage, had arranged his daughter's marriage with Shankar, a railway clerk. What Yelliah did not know was that his daughter was deeply in love with Prakash who lived near by. Both the families lived in the Ashuk Bazar locality.

The date for Jagdamba's marriage with Shankar had been fixed. Yelliah had left no stone unturned to make it a grand affair. He had even sold property worth Rs 40,000 to finance the marriage. A day before the mahurat, Jagdamba mustered enough courage and sent a note to Shankar, her prospective husband, saying that she was in love with Prakash and that Shankar should not agree to the marriage. Shankar immediately dashed to Jagdamba's home to verify the authenticity of the note. The would-be bride confirmed her message, much to the shock of her parents and Shankar promptly gave up the idea of marrying Jagdamba. Jagdamba's father was naturally furious. Neighbours and family friends suggested that Jagdamba should marry Prakash. There was a small hurdle, though. The girl belonged to the Munnurukapu community while her lover was a Mutharasu. The elders took it upon themselves to iron out this caste complication.

As a result of their efforts the marriage atmosphere was hastily revived. Preparations for the mahurat once again began in earnest. Everybody seemed to have forgotten the brief unsavoury interlude. The bride's family was particularly joyful. Then tragedy caught everybody unprepared. On May 9, the day of the mahurat, the mandap was tastefully decorated and music added to the atmosphere of festivity. Inside the house, Jagdamba was going through the traditional rituals surrounded by her friends and female relatives. But there was no sign of the bridegroom's party. A nervous Yelliah sent word to Prakash's home. The man returned and informed Yelliah that Prakash was untraceable since the previous night.

For Yelliah it was the unkindest cut of all. Unable to control his emotions, he rushed into Jagdamba's room and ordered everybody out. Then, dragging his teenage daughter by her plait, he proceeded towards the adjacent bathroom where Yelliah's eyes fell on a chopping knife. He first dealt a blow on his daughter's head and with the second blow he literally beheaded her. Completely drenched in Jagdamba's blood and with the knife in one hand, Yelliah set off towards the Fazalganj police station where he surrendered himself.

The assembled guests and elders were furious at Prakash's disappearance and the dubious role of his parents. Angered by Jagdamba's gory death and the role played by Prakash in the tragic development, a few hot-heads raided Prakash's house. Soon after, Prakash's father was taken into protective custody by the police but Prakash himself remained untraceable.

The police say that the case is simple enough with hardly any scope for investigation. In the eyes of the law, Yelliah is a murderer though there is universal sympathy for him and his family. When Yelliah's lawyer moved a bail petition in the court, the prosecution did not oppose it. Why Prakash jilted his "beloved" however remains a mystery.

KALYANI SHANKER, Hyderabad

Real money vs real Janata

IN front of Mr S. I. Shakthar, the Election Commissioner, all the various leaders of the different shades of the original Janata Party claim to be the "real" Janata: everyone seems to want the symbol of the higher man. But the desire to be known as the "real Janata" has become keen of late, and for a good reason. Because the history of the Janata Party is littered with IOUs. During the hectic months when the Janata was ordering lanes, advertising campaigns, it was still adding up its bills. If the Party had won, of course, payment would have been no problem. But it got demolished. And the "real Janata" still has to pay at least Rs 17 lakhs to an army of printers, printers, boarding contractors and newspapers. In return for services rendered in 1978.

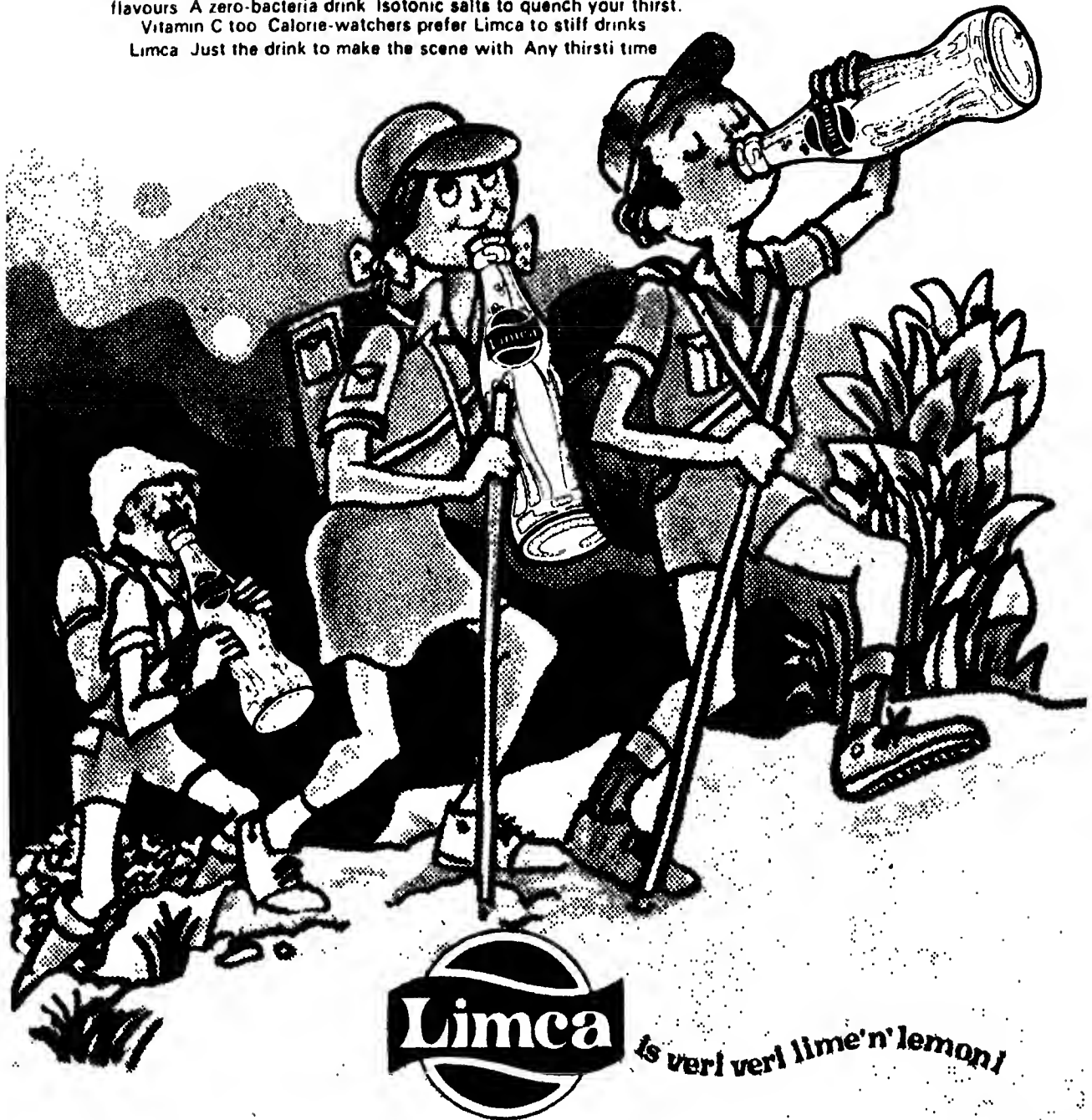
Meanwhile, in Delhi, when Babu Jagdeev Ram changed one name first to form his private version of the "real Janata", the Janata (J) he not only took his presents out of the Janata Party but also two typewriters belonging to the Janata Parliamentary Party. On March 11, Madhu Dandavate wrote to Babul requesting him to return the property of the "real" Janata. But Babul obviously had different ideas about the problem: the typewriters, worth about Rs 7,000, remain in his custody.

ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA
Bombay

Thirsti times

Hikingtimes Limcatimes

Limca A zingy, tangy mixture of Jamaican lime and Sicilian lemon
flavours A zero-bacteria drink Isotonic salts to quench your thirst.
Vitamin C too Calorie-watchers prefer Limca to stiff drinks
Limca Just the drink to make the scene with Any thirsti time



RADEUS/PE/L-3/80

Children missing for 27 months

Parents have in vain pleaded before three PMs

THE three-wheeler sped away noisily on the afternoon of January 13, 1978. Its occupants were three young brothers — Satish (8), Praveen alias Beenu (5), Susheel alias Banti (2) and the driver, Raj Kumar. No one suspected anything. The children did not raise an alarm since they knew their driver well; in fact they called him 'uncle'. Until a few days ago, Raj Kumar was a regular visitor to the children's home and for eight long years he had been their neighbour and a sub-tenant of Mr Kirpa, a scrapdealer and the children's father. They never returned.

On that fateful day, Kirpa was on his usual rounds and his wife Sharda was busy with the visiting estate officials of Chandigarh; they had come to check the records following a complaint against the new landlord Munshi, who had purchased House 2606 in Sector 22C for Rs 60,000. The complaint was about Munshi's ability to pay the amount. On a request from the old landlord, Munshi had permitted Kirpa to retain the *barsati* on the second floor without charging an additional paisa. However, Munshi did not want Raj Kumar, a sub-tenant of Kirpa to stay. A misunderstanding cropped up as Raj Kumar thought he had been thrown out at Kirpa's instance. According to four-year-old Guddi, sister of the kidnapped brothers, Raj Kumar had prom-

ised to buy sweets for the children and taken them to the market in his three-wheeler.

The police hunted for Raj Kumar in Ludhiana, Amritsar, Srinagar and elsewhere. But he was not to be found. This intriguing case was eventually handed over to Inspector Des Raj. Des Raj was perhaps the only investigating officer who inspired confidence in the kidnapped children's parents. As a matter of fact, Des Raj asked the relatives of the alleged kidnapper to hand over Raj Kumar 'within a week'. Kumar's folks agreed to do so and gave an undertaking in writing to this effect.

Soon enough, the situation took an interesting turn. Raj Kumar's brother-in-law, incidentally, his namesake, who claimed to be an office-bearer of the Amritsar City Janata Party, allegedly tried to influence the police investigation. But he failed before the never-say-die Des Raj. Des Raj was, however, transferred to Haryana under the orders of SSP, Chandigarh.

According to Kirpa, after Raj's transfer the police lost all interest in the case. "We have spent Rs 8,70. We sold our utensils. We have now lost all hope. Some newspapermen came to us. They say they have published a few stories. But who is bothered?" Among the three kidnapped brothers, only Satish attended school.

Kirpa and Sharda told this correspondent: "Twentyseven months have passed but nothing has come out. The local police were cool even when they were informed of the exact hideout of the accused. They even called us fools... We have written to the three Prime Ministers on different occasions but failed to draw sympathy from them. Perhaps they were too busy handling far more important issues or maybe because we are poor people". Sharda went on: "Once we went to meet the Chief Commissioner (CC) of Chandigarh Union Territory. But his personal staff refused to let us in. Then a newspaper reporter, Mr Bhanot, took our *darkhasat* (application) and handed it to CC".

"On January 17 last year, Kumar returned home and stayed with his family for three days. We informed the police, including the Inspector General and requested them to raid the premises where Kumar was believed to be staying. But nobody paid any heed. We gave the police several other tips and also the list of people who had seen the children and met Raj Kumar in Srinagar, Sirsa, Delhi, Amritsar, Ludhiana and elsewhere. We have even given them (the police) the names of persons who were in constant touch with him (Raj Kumar) and were delivering threatening letters to us. But the police are still keeping mum. Perhaps they are only meant to serve the rich", Kirpa said wiping his tears. Sharda sadly complained that they were living on the good wishes of the authorities. "When we last met the Chief Commissioner he said: '*Agar kismet main hoga to mil jayenge*' (If fate so wills, the children will be found)".

The living quarters of the Kirpas measures eight feet by eight feet. In this tiny room live the remaining five members of the family—parents, two daughters and a son. One of the daughters is married. She lives close by with her husband. Curiously, Raj Kumar hasn't stopped writing to the Kirpa family. His letters to Sharda are passionate and couched in polite language. Reading his letters to Sharda one gets the impression that Raj Kumar shares a romantic relationship with the mother of the kidnapped children.

The police have refused to believe Kirpa's allegations. "We can understand the cries of frustrated parents. But was it a simple case of crime?", the investigating police inspector Pandit Jai Narain asked. Narain told this correspondent that he was planning to visit Srinagar soon and that he would conduct a search in the orphanages in the region. It is possible that Raj Kumar might have dumped the children in an orphanage.

A CORRESPONDENT,
Chandigarh

The grief-stricken parents, Kirpa and Sharda





**Leonard
chills
lemonade
in London**



**Leonard
keeps
cauliflower
crisp
in Cochin**



**Leonard
keeps Bina
smiling
in Bombay**

Leonard serves millions of families around the world dependably. When Leonard owners are asked about their refrigerators, they just smile. After all, what more need we say about a friend of the family!



Leonard
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Adivasis duped

Racketeers corner forest land



An adivasi engaged in rope-making

SEMI-CLAD, semi-starved tribals, living in makeshift leafhuts and barely eking out an existence deposited Rs 11.40 lakhs, for something that they have never possessed and probably will never set their eyes on. It all happened in the Panchpir subdivision of Mayurbhanj district, Orissa, where under the garb of the "Land to the Landless" scheme, racketeers and fortune-seekers acquired for themselves valuable 'reserved forest' land.

The racketeers collected applications from the landless tribals and deposited Rs 11.40 lakhs as 'forest royalty' on their behalf. This, however, was no act of benevolence. With an eye on the enormous profits that could be reaped from the 15,321 acres of richly endowed forest land, the racketeers acquired sale deeds of the same land with the signatures of prospective adivasi owners on them. Thus even before the adivasis had an inkling of what was going on, rich 'forest land' meant for them had passed on to the hands of fortune seekers engaged in clandestine timber operations, who had lost no time in taking advantage of the illiterate tribals. Not all the land was, however, timber land. In most cases the land settled in the names of the tribals was unfit for agriculture.

It is not merely the adivasis alone, but the Government which is also being robbed of its land. Strangely the government seems to be unaware of the goings-on. Politicians and senior bureaucrats were impressed at the efficiency with which the tahsildars and revenue officers managed to distribute surplus land, which was reflected in the ever mounting official figures. Indeed, the scheme was proclaimed as a vote-catching gimmick and the achievements in implementing the programme were cited to exploit the tribal vote bank. Not everybody, however, could overlook the real consequences of the scheme: the damage that was being done to the rich timber of the reserve forest area. Puny attempts were made by some honest forest officers to save the forests from organised conspiracy and fraud, but these were promptly suppressed by government officials.

The indiscriminate grant of lease of the 'protected forest' lands has had far-reaching consequences. The leasing out of 'protected forests' has led to the loss of 'buffer' stock of wood used for consumption—and has caused the local people to use the wood from reserve forests to satisfy their daily needs. In an attempt to protect the forests of the district, it has been suggested that the surplus woodlands should be maintained as intermediate forests and the reserve forests, which are state property, should be declared 'lease banned'. It has further been suggested that all the previous cases of the lease of protected forest lands in the names of the landless adivasis should be reviewed, and in appropriate cases, leases already granted should be declared void and be vested back in the government. The Government is yet to step in to put an end to the racket. Meanwhile, the adivasis remain as poor as ever, while the fortune hunters lose no time in making what money they can.

AMARENDRA BOSE, Mayurbhanj

Sanjay may dominate after polls

SOME pundits in Delhi still have their doubts, but I personally think, it will not be difficult for the Congress(I) to form a government in each of the nine states, either independently or in collaboration with some regional Parties. Indeed, in eight states Congress(I) Chief Ministers should come through while the Chief Ministership in the remaining state will go to the DMK. How long Mr Karunanidhi will be able to retain his Chief Ministership is a different matter, but there is little doubt that he will fulfil his life's ambition once again. In the eight other states, even if the Congress(I) gets 45 per cent of the seats they will form the governments. And if they can secure 35 per cent of the valid votes polled it should be easy to get at least 45 per cent of the seats. The other Parties are hopelessly divided and no one would expect any of them to secure 35 per cent of the valid votes polled or 45 per cent of the seats.

For the Congress(I), distribution of Party tickets was itself an ordeal. Even Mrs Gandhi had to admit publicly that some "good people" were left out in the process. Selection of Chief Ministers and Ministers will be a more serious problem. Except in Orissa, where Mr J. B. Patnaik is a certainty, there are two, three, or sometimes four candidates for the post of CM. When tickets were distributed, each of them tried to grab the maximum number and during the election battle each tried his best to get as many of his own supporters elected and as many of his adversaries defeated. After the results come out, they will all be engaged in the third round of battle — trying to occupy the most prestigious chair in the respective state secretariats. And at the same time, opponents will have to be kept far away. In this, the final battle, they will make frantic efforts to get either Mrs Gandhi's or Mr Sanjay Gandhi's support.

Ultimately, the extent to which Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay will intervene in the selection of Chief Ministers and Ministers will depend on the actual results. If the Party secures more than 55 per cent of the seats in most states, Sanjay will naturally have a big say in the ministerial selections. Of course, it can be safely predicted that no group will be isolated from power completely, irrespective of who gets the Chief Ministership.

For the largest state of India, Uttar Pradesh, the name of Mr



By BARUN SENGUPTA



J. B. Patnaik



Dr Jagannath Mishra

C. P. N. Singh is being mentioned in some circles, though in all likelihood the post will go to Mr N. D. Tewari. Mr Singh is considered a rising star in the Congress(I), but in the eyes of the Party high command he is not experienced enough to occupy the most important chair of Uttar Pradesh yet. At the moment, he is likely to get a more important assignment at the Centre after which he might be sent to Lucknow. So for the present at least, Mr Tewari is expected to get the Chief Ministership. Mr Kamalapati Tripathi's son is also tipped for an important portfolio, provided the family behaves well.

In Bihar, the contest will ultimately be confined to Dr Jagannath Mishra and Mr Kedar Nath Pandey. Dr Mishra is still the favourite and unless all the other leaders of the state gang up against him, it will be very difficult to deprive him of the Bihar CM's post. Of course, he will have to accommodate supporters of Mr Pandey, Mr Bhisma Narayan Singh and Mr Sitaram Kesari in his cabinet. In no Congress(I)-run state is the Chief Minister expected to get absolute authority again. The system of checks and balances will go on operating in all the Congress(I) states.

Mr V. C. Shukla, I am afraid, is in for some serious trouble. And if Mr P. C. Sethi goes ahead with his newly formed Shukla-Sethi alliance against Arjun Singh he will also be in for trouble. To declare a crusade against Mr Kamal Nath is one thing, but to go on propagating — even in limited circles — that Mrs Amteshwar Anand is interfering in Madhya Pradesh politics is something else altogether. The Party high command will not tolerate this. Even if Mr Arjun Singh cannot be made the Chief Minister of MP now, Mr Shukla's future in the present set-up of the Congress(I) will continue to remain bleak unless he changes his attitude drastically. The scene in Maharashtra is very complex because there are so many claimants for the Chief Ministership. According to persons close to the Party high command the veteran Mr Vasantdada Patil is expected to get the first chance. In Gujarat it will either be Mr M. R. Solanki or Mr Yogendra Makwana while in Rajasthan Mr Jagannath Pahadia will in all probability be the first choice.

In Punjab again there are a large number of claimants. Some people are keen on getting back Mr Zail Singh as the Chief Minister of the state, while Mr Darbara Singh's name is also being mentioned. Some pundits suggest that Mr G. S. Dhillon's claim cannot be ignored either. It is to be seen whom Mrs Gandhi and Mr Gandhi prefer.

Sanjay played a significant role in the selection of the Party's candidates. In the election battle he was second in command. If everything goes well for the Party he will have a big say in the choice of Chief Ministers and Ministers. And when that comes about, the Party will by and large accept his dominant role, with or without reservations, whatever the pundits might say now.

Mister Grand Slam

ASHOK KAMATH profiles
Prakash Padukone

Vijayanand Mullerdaian

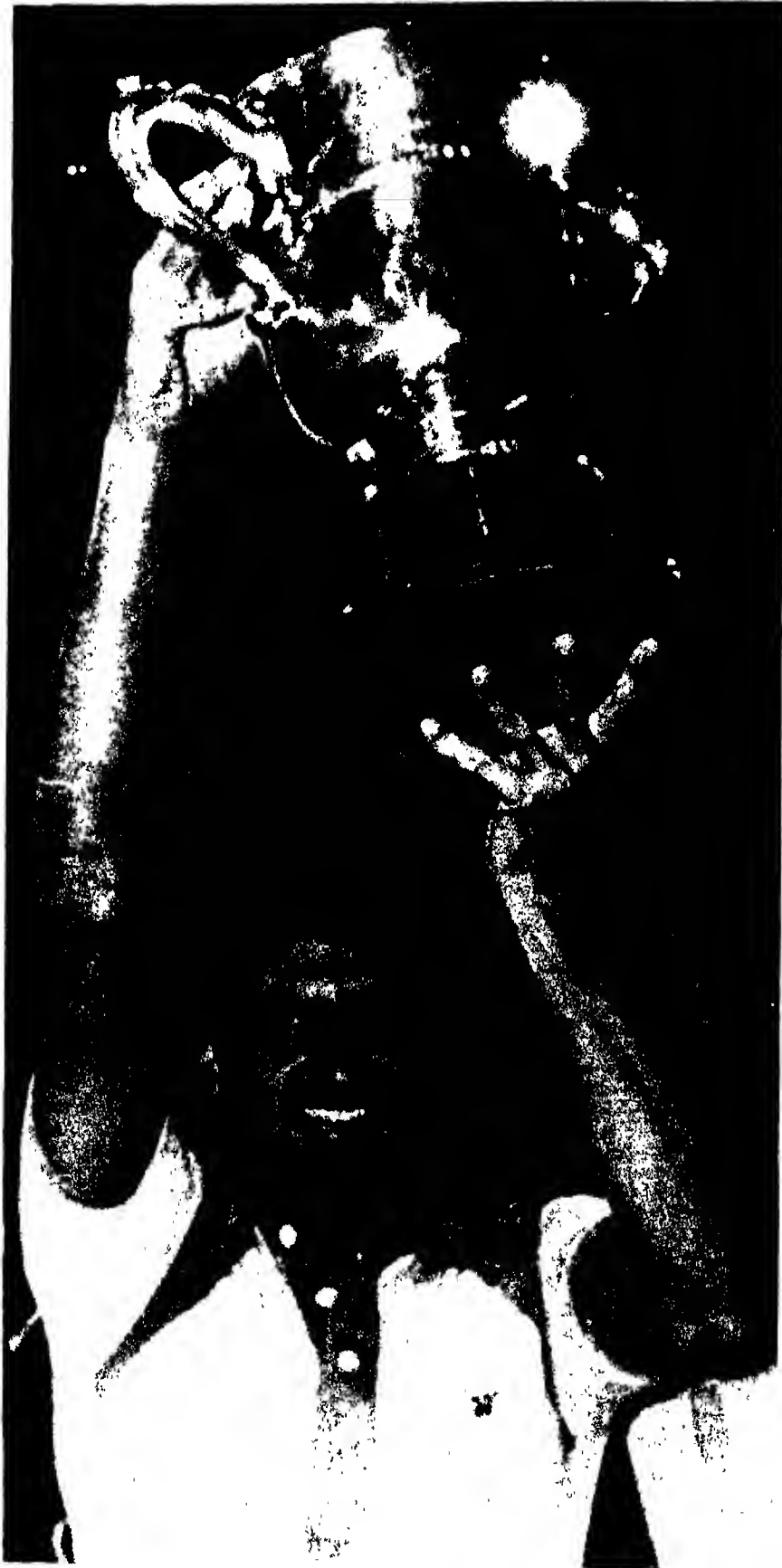


THE TV crew from Madras had just finished filming the interview with the new superstar. On an afterthought, the producer suggested that they shoot a sequence of him chatting with his parents. Prakash called the senior Padukones and the trio posed for the TV camera, although the Padukones were visibly self-conscious. Someone suggested that they actually talk. Prakash broke into Konkani and that seemed to ease things a bit. "Hope to see you again in May after you've won the world championship," the producer remarked, as he took his leave of "Prashanth", 64, 15th Cross Road, Malleswaram, Bangalore 560003—the home of Prakash "Grand Slam" Padukone.

The TV floodlights, the radio microphone, the photographers' flash bulbs, the media men in general tripping over each other for exclusive interviews, not to talk of the gladiatorial reception. What does it all feel like to suddenly have the spotlight trained on you like never before?

"Well, it really is a great feeling," admits Prakash. "You know, scarcely did I imagine that I would get the kind of reception I did when I landed in Bangalore. On the flight from London to Bombay, the Air India crew gave us a reception of sorts. We landed in Bombay in the early hours of the morning and there were a couple of hundred well-wishers and friends to receive us. But the reception at Bangalore airport was something unprecedented. It is probably once in a lifetime that one gets the opportunity of driving in an open jeep with people lining the sides of the road, lustily cheering you. At least these things didn't happen to sportsmen in this country often."

"But one has to take all this in one's stride. At least that is what I honestly believe in and that's one thing I have been able to do. Whether this kind of personality cult, as you term it, can have an adverse effect or otherwise, is entirely up to



the individual at the receiving end. Becoming the cynosure of all eyes can have a twofold effect: at one level it might go to the head of the concerned person and at another, expectations are automatically raised high every time you go out on court."

In a society where social responses oscillate between extremes of blind idolatry to downright iconoclasm, it is common enough to see sportsmen being treated according to their performances. To drive home the point I remind Prakash of the report that soon after he lost the final of the All-England Championship, Llem Swie King's statue was demolished and the fallen hero was the target of brickbats even in his hometown.

"Yes, I agree that we have to be more balanced in our reactions. We either put our heroes on a pedestal

when they win or (once they lose) consign them to the dustbin. At least, speaking for myself, I am not affected in either way since I play for my own satisfaction. The receptions and all the exposure and the glare of publicity are only incidental. Next year, if I don't retain my titles and consequently do not get this kind of reception, I will miss it at all. Nor will it mean that I will not try my best after that." It sounded like a new Prakash talking; Prakash the philosopher.

"Like one of my friends told me that he felt the entire thing was being overdone. He felt that people were making a mountain out of a molehill. It is not for me to comment on whether people have over-reacted or done otherwise. I am only saying that if someone has done something remarkable, go ahead and honour him. But at the same time, do not kick him where it hurts, when he fails." At the moment, anyway, Prakash has reason enough to bask in the euphoria that has followed his hat-trick of triumphs in the Swedish, Danish and All-England Badminton Championships.

W

HAT is the young badminton star like as a person? In Prakash's own words, "I am basically a very reticent person. I take a lot of time to get used to people. I prefer a quiet atmosphere with my small circle of friends. Not for me any heavy socialising or anything like that". Speaking to him, one can vouch for that fact. It took

a considerable effort to draw Prakash out of his shell. But as the interview went along, he became more articulate, more forthcoming in his replies. At the end of it all, one got the impression that he is desperately trying to shield his eyes from the glare of publicity, without being offensive in the process.

Almost anyone who has anything more than a nodding acquaintance with Prakash speaks of him as being a glutton for hard work. In fact, his being a cut above the rest on the badminton court has often been ascribed to the fact that he is his own ruthless taskmaster. Does he really enjoy his uncompromising, spartan discipline and rigorous work schedule? Does it not require a certain amount of masochism to drive himself to reach training targets he sets himself even when there are times

set yourself. And it pays handsomely in the long run. I have adopted the Indonesian training system. Until I trained with the Indonesian national team in Jakarta in October-November 1977, I followed a rather unscientific system of training. It was in Jakarta that I realised the importance of training for a little of everything: speed, stamina, power, footwork and flexibility. For speed we do sprints, for footwork improvement we do the skipping exercises, for developing strength we do weight training and for flexibility we go through gymnastic exercises.

"Every morning, six days of the week, along with a band of local friends, I train for about an hour and a half at the Kanteeravee Stadium. On Mondays we do only long distance running. This is to improve our stamina. Then of course, the

sprints help us improve speed. On Tuesdays we concentrate on weight training while on Wednesdays we work out in the gym. Thursdays are devoted to skipping. Fridays are again consumed by weight training and Saturdays we devote to shadow badminton. We go through all the strokes in the game with all the seriousness of actually playing. After the end of a stroke we make it a point to return to the centre line before executing the next one. On some Saturday mornings we play some other games just to break the monotony. The workouts begin at 7 a.m. every day. But that is not the end of the routine."

"I am back home by around 9 and in office by 10.30.

Normally I break off from office around 4.30 pm and head straight for the club. It is only in the evenings that I play badminton. We play in all seriousness: no one is allowed to take the games lightly. You know, it is so hectic—the training and my job in the bank—that I make it a point to keep Sundays completely free for rest. I just don't stir out on Sundays."

The Padukone household in Malleswaram represents a typical middle-class home: unostentatious, functional and with all the attributes that distinguish a house from a home. The house belongs to Prakash's grandfather, Mr. P. Annaji Rao, and was built a couple of months after Prakash was born. The living room "reeks" of Prakash and badminton. A glass shelf, almost bursting at its seams, contains trophies, mainly won



Prakash with his fiancée, Ujjala Karkal

when he does not relish doing it?

"It is like this. Of course there are times when, in the midst of training, I feel like giving up. Like say this morning I decided to run 25 laps but by the time I've completed say 20, I am too physically or mentally tired to continue. But I never quit. I tell myself that it is like notching up 13 points in a game and then becoming tired. On a court I never give up until I've reached (or my opponent has) the magical 15 points, no matter how tired I am. Likewise, I never give up until I've completed the number of laps or sit-ups or whatever—I have set myself."

"Maybe there is a certain amount of masochism involved to inflict pain on yourself when you are training but there can be nothing more satisfying than reaching the target you've

by the second son of the household. The All-England trophy gets pride of place in the centre of the room. Across a rather amateurishly designed thermocol-trophy runs the legend: "Hail King Prakash".

PRAKASH is the second child of Ramesh and Ahalya Padukone. The eldest, Pradeep, is an electronics engineer in the United States; Mahesh works for the State Bank of Mysore; sister Padmini is currently doing a course in catering in Pune while the youngest of the lot, Harish, is a second year B.Com. student. Prakash himself graduated in Commerce from the MES College, hardly a stone's throw away from home. A couple of days after he won the All-England title at Wembley, his employers—The Union Bank of India—announced his second promotion in less than two years. What does his work at the bank involve? Says Prakash, "I am attached to the Development Manager's office. I am mostly involved in deposit mobilisation. Naturally there is a certain amount of customer relations work. I started off as a grade II officer, got my first promotion after I won the Commonwealth Games title and now I am a grade I senior officer. I quite enjoy my work. Banking is not all that drab as some people make it out to be. I would have preferred to work in one of the branches because one gets to learn a lot if one is shifted around from one department to another. But it is only fair that I work in the administrative office because it makes things simpler when I have to take leave to play in tournaments or attend coaching camps."

Prakash belongs to the minority tribe of sportsmen who have been able to match their performances on the field with those inside the classroom. Until Pre-University he maintained a first class grading and graduated in Commerce with a second. How did he manage? Were there points when he found himself at crossroads where academics clashed with badminton? "Not really. The badminton season did not exactly clash with my examinations. Except on one occasion when I was training for the Thomas Cup in Patiala and I had my second year university exams coming up. I took my books along with me to the camp and after a hectic day of workouts, I would study late into the night for my exams. I returned to Bangalore one day before the start of the exams, completed them and reported back at the camp. That way, I have invariably managed to have the best of both worlds."

After beating Liem Swie King for the first time in five encounters, Prakash ascribed his success to the fact that he managed to slow down King and thus upset the former champion's rhythm. Does he fancy that — other conditions remaining more or less the same—the tactic will pay off when they meet again? "Honestly," Prakash beamed, "I think that is the only way one can



Two photographs from Prakash's family album

beat him" At least that is the only way I can. If I try to beat him at his own style of play—the fast, hustling, power game—it will be disastrous. Like it was on the four occasions before my Wembley triumph.

"No, it is not as though King does remarkably more work than I do. I think we work more or less the same. But he has started that kind of work early. All champions normally start early. It was not so in my case. In addition, there are a lot of other factors that go to build up the physical and mental resistance of a player. Like diet for example. We are uncompromising vegetarians at home. All my non-vegetarian eating is done outside home. And that apart, I undergo strict training in the morning, rush back home for a bath, shave and breakfast, rush to the office, work and then go back to the court. I'm not complaining, but it is quite different for King and many other champions. They spend most of their time in the camp, training in the morning, have a rest in the afternoon and are fresh for another session in the evening. In terms of ability to put in hard work, the conditions are more conducive to King and his kind. Sportsmen in India have also to keep their jobs going because that is what is going to provide security once our playing days are over"

If someone came forward and told our top sportsmen to concentrate on their respective sporting careers, assuring them that they would be taken care of after their playing days are over, would it lead to an improvement in the performance of the sportsmen concerned?

"Yes, it will lead to a more professional approach to sports if some kind of security can be provided for the future of our sportsmen. But like I said, without the assurance that even after your playing days are over you will be provided with something to fall back upon, sportsmen and sportswomen cannot be asked to concentrate on their respective sporting disciplines and not look beyond."

And talking of professionalism, does Prakash intend turning pro? Is there any future for professionalism in the game of badminton? "At the moment at least, there is little point in my turning pro. If I do, it would mean that I cannot take part in Asian and Commonwealth games. This means my avenues of international competition are restricted. Moreover, in badminton we have nothing like the tennis circuit for pros. The money involved in pro badminton is nothing compared with pro tennis or pro golf or pro boxing. There is an acute need for money to come into badminton in a big way like tennis or football or boxing. And I suppose one way to see that done is to get the Americans involved in it."

"A step in the direction of holding prize-money badminton tournaments was made last September. Three thousand pounds for the first prize is not a bad beginning. But like I said, it will take time before a circuit is developed and professionals can look forward to it as a source of livelihood like many tennis players do."

Does Prakash see badminton as a mass sport in this country? "It is difficult to say, considering the costs involved. Unless equipment is subsidised, it is difficult to imagine a situation where badminton develops a really broad base". True indeed. But in its own small way, Prakash winning the All-England title is probably about the best thing that happened to the game of badminton in this country in recent times. The fanfare, the pageantry, the publicity was as much for Prakash as it was for the game of badminton. Prakash's fortunes on international badminton courts will no doubt give a renewed fillip to the game. At another level, because of the glamour and glory the game has recently acquired, parents need not necessarily look up to a Gavaskar or a Kapil Dev as models for their children: a Prakash Padukone could also do the trick.

In the meanwhile, even before the starry dust has settled, Prakash at the moment appears to be riding a streetcar named desire—a desire to win the official world champion's title at Jakarta.

League beleaguered

The fate of Calcutta's annual football mela, the League, is uncertain. S. N. M. ABDI reports.



Police in action during the East Bengal-Mohun Bagan finals

MAY is drawing to a close but the Calcutta Football League has failed to start. This had never happened before, not even during the traumatic Naxalite upsurge. Come what may, the League would start by the second week of May. But not this year. Many still bravely believe that the situation can be retrieved. But for most, the prospects are gloomy. If eventually the League is not held, "it will be sheer agony for me as I cannot spend the long summer months without the staple diet of football" says Kamal Das, a 19-year-old for whom the maidan is a place of pilgrimage.

Of course there are others who disagree with Das; they believe that a football tournament should not be held in Calcutta until the menace of soccer violence is controlled. The last two days of the Federation Cup (staged in April-May) saw the ugliest outburst of violence in the history of Calcutta football. More than 150 people were injured and Eden Gardens, the venue of the matches, incurred damages amounting to Rs 50,000 when irate spectators smashed concrete seats and collapsible gates. The Federation Cup finals, played between East Bengal and Mohun Bagan saw a complete law and order breakdown. The fanaticism of football followers and fierce club loyalties reached such a peak that the supporter of one club killed another

club's supporter as the two were watching the match on television.

The West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr Jyoti Basu saw it all. He was there at the stadium to give away the prizes. Before his eyes, officials of the two clubs quarrelled and fought on the sidelines while the players settled scores among themselves inside the playing area. Taking the cue from their heroes, the spectators in the stands went on a rampage. The Chief Minister was prompt in condemning the players and club officials for setting a bad example before their supporters. Later, both the clubs apologised publicly. Soon after, the Chief Minister announced that he would meet representatives of the three big clubs and officials of Calcutta Police to discuss ways in which vandalism on the football ground could be prevented during the forthcoming League and the IFA Shield matches.

But there are other problems besetting the League. Problems legal and an issue of face. As things stand, if the IFA decides to abide by the verdict of two courts, the League can start immediately. But if the IFA decides to press its point of view in a higher court of law, the League may not be held this year at all. According to the IFA Handbook, every year, the winners of the second, third and fourth divisions were promoted to the first, second and third divisions respectively for the next year's League. Correspondingly, the team

at the bottom of the table in the first, second and third divisions was relegated at the end of the season to the second, third and fourth divisions respectively. However, towards the close of 1978, the IFA hit upon a new idea. At a special meeting of the governing body it was decided that holders of the first four positions in the second, third and fourth divisions would compete in the first, second and third divisions in the forthcoming League. Similarly, it was also agreed upon that four teams at the bottom of first, second and third division tables would be relegated to the second, third and fourth division for the next season. In January 1979, the IFA sent a copy of the altered regulations to the Registrar of the Societies and it was duly recorded. Informing the registrar was necessary because the IFA is a registered society under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act of 1961.

The new "rule" dealt a severe blow to a medium budget local team, Bhratri Sangha. At the end of the 1978 League it found itself among the last four teams in the first division. Relegation to the second division stared it in the face. So it went to court, challenging the validity of the IFA's governing body's rights to change the regulations. Bhratri Sangha declared at Calcutta's City Civil Court that only a three-fourths majority of the IFA's general body (composed of 177 members) can effect such an amendment. It maintained that the IFA's governing body (composed of 34 members) did not have the power to make the alteration. The court upheld this, giving an ad-interim order of injunction restraining the IFA from enforcing the amendment.

The Sangha won the first round convincingly but the IFA filed a suit in the Calcutta High Court, challenging the order of the lower court. The judgement once again went in favour of Bhratri Sangha. It said, among other things: "Taking the prima facie of the matter, we cannot help but observing that there is hardly any substantial ground which would prompt us in disturbing the order of the Learned Judge of the Court below."

The IFA's dynamic and affable secretary, Mr Ashok Ghosh, is naturally worried about the League's prospects. On May 21 he told me: "We have left it to the (IFA) president to decide whether we should go to court again or not. If he decides not to appeal in a higher court, the League may start at the end of June". Mr Ghosh also pointed out: "To save time, we may divide the first division teams into two groups which will mean lesser number of matches. We may also make arrangements for staging five matches at five grounds daily. We have already forwarded this proposal to Calcutta Police."

SHATRU claims to have taught his girlfriend **Reena Roy** how to "talk". True, she was really dumb when she launched her film career and her snatter sister **Burkha** had to do all the talking for her. And now **Shatru** complains that she talks too much—talks back at him, of all people. **Yogita Bli** is another girl who has been trained in the art of talking—by **Mithun Chakravarty**. Before she met **Mithun**, she would hardly talk. The reason? She was busy mooning either over **Kiran Kumar** or **Kishore Kumar**. Now it's **Mithun**. What ever **Mithun** says, she repeats it. What he doesn't say, like they are having an affair—she says, in place of him. That's talking.

YOU should have seen **Zeena Aman** competing the popular Awards Nite in Bombay recently. Her way-out, knock-out looks added plenty of glamour to the occasion. The award winners however seemed to be the most unlikely choice. For one thing **Jaya Bhaduri Bachchan**, did not really come up with a dazzling performance in *Naukar*. Many among the audience felt that **Jaya's** award was a "consolation prize". And surely, there were better male performances than **Amol Palekar's**. It was more of a critics' choice. Now coming back to the coupere. She had her hair done up in Red Indian style and her lively wit and entertaining chatter were

Mati Lal Mondal



Mithun: Silence is silver, speech is gold

the highlights of the show. **Rekha** sat through the event with a smirk on her face which read: "Wait till next year—that'll be the year of **Rekha**."

BENGALI cinema has been introduced to a good combination; **Amol** and **Smita** from Bombay. A Press conference was held recently to announce the making of *Ashwamedha Ghor*, the Bengali production in which the two are cast. **Smita** sat throughout the conference hunched in her seat like a curious youngster. She looked as if she was brought to a party of grown-ups. The star was gaping at everyone and everything with a wonder-struck look. But she will come alright in the movie. Her off-screen crumpled looks are now quite familiar to the glitter-world sharks.

SANJEEV is no more the biggest contender for the title of filmdom's biggest *kanjoos*. Now it's his pal **Jeetendra** who is in the running. **Jeetu** wrested the title from the senior, confirmed *kanjoos* **Rajendra Kumar**. One wonders what **Reema Kapoor**, brought up on the extravagance of the *Kapoor*s, would have done as the daughter-in-law of **Rajendra Kumar**?

THE producer who can heave a sigh of relief is **Raj Grover**. He has finished shooting *Parveen Babi's* but for his new film *Taaqat*. Now it doesn't matter really if she decides to chuck films for good. There was no doubt that she would complete a big-budget film like *Shaan*. But a new producer like **Raj Grover** would have been badly hit if she had jilted his film.



Reena Roy: Shatru's chatter box

EVERYONE knows that a male star feels embarrassed if the word gets around that he needs a wig. But who could imagine that a female star would feel equally embarrassed and try her utmost to hide the fact that she needs spectacles? Can you beat it? For specs are quite in, especially those with the new in-frames. But our little girl **Moushumi** avoids glasses like the plague. She even doesn't mind getting a squint. Maybe she believes that men don't make passes at girls who wear glasses. And that is why she has this squint and makes most of the passes herself, especially at heroes like **Vinod Mehra**.

Shivaraman Gulvady



Bholi Boli Yogita Bli

Shivaraman Gulvady

A MALAYALAM director who has more than 50 films to his credit will soon need a psychiatrist. He is convinced that his wife has become a victim to the evil spirits generated by Balu Mahendra. It's disgusting to listen to such stories, but they're being floated every day since Shoba's tragic death. Ironically, Balu Mahendra was the man who photographed his biggest hit.

THE moment Pratap Pothan was paired with Sri Vidya in two successive films, the pulp Press in Kerala started spawning gossips. "Since my Thakara turned out to be a record smasher, all kinds of nasty stories about me have been created. But linking my name with Sri Vidya was the limit. She's married to a very successful producer, and touch-wood, it's such an ideal relationship. Just as I was thinking how nice it's to work with a seasoned artiste like Sri Vidya the gossip mills have started grinding..." complained Pratap.

ONE cannot help admiring Jayalalitha's candour. When a Bombay-based journalist thought she was married to "some Jayaram" because she calls herself Jayalalitha Jayaram, the star not only corrected him (Jayaram happens to be her father's name) but also added that she has been going steady with the Telugu actor Shoban Babu for the last seven years. "I cannot marry him as he's already married," said the actress who's struggling to stage a come-back. Asked if Shoban Babu could be a help to her, Jayalalitha replied, "I'd rather try on my own." Whether she succeeds in doing it or not, one must say this much of her: that she's one actress who doesn't go around cribbing, and despite the emotional and professional upheavals in her young life she carried herself with poise and dignity.

STARS in Madras seem to have more *chamchas* and side-kicks than the ones in Bombay. Some of the enterprising ones help the upcoming stars to organise fan-clubs (called *Manrams*). They go around decorating cinema halls,

screening new movies of their matinee-idols and keeping a tab of his/her box-office records. Chinna Annamalai, once a struggling *chamcha*, made his fortune when he organised hundreds of *Sivaji Ganesan Manrams* throughout Tamil Nadu. As a token of appreciation Sivaji helped him turn producer. Some of his earlier ventures including *General Chakravarthy* were hits, but his most ambitious film *Dharmaraja* turned out to be the thud of the season. Annamalai must be thinking that he should have been independent long back.

THE failure of *Dharmaraja* is worrying K. R. Vijaya. Most of her hit films starred Sivaji and it's a long long time since she carried a film on her own shoulders.

A WELL-known psychiatrist in the city may soon go bonkers. He often gets frantic calls from fans who want to speak to Dr Rajkumar. There is one particularly lonely lady who keeps telephoning him at odd hours. The psychiatrist has been telling his callers that he is not the Kannada hero, Rajkumar (who

resides mostly in Madras) and has an honorary doctorate. Our suggestion to the harassed psychiatrist is to add his family or caste name to the inscription in the telephone directory.

Sometime ago when the psychiatrist had gone to England, his wife was harassed by the lonely lady who refused to believe that her matinee-idol was in the UK. "I just want to hear him sing once over the phone. I saw him coming out of a studio this evening. How could he have gone to London?" she insisted.

THE first film directed by Lakshmi Muzhalai Pattalam is fairly interesting but since it was supervised by her 'guru' director K. Balachander, the credit for its success has gone to him.

BHARATIRAJA and his cameraman for five films, Nivas, seem to have parted company for good after producing *Kallukkul Eeram*. This film was directed by Nivas in which Bharatiraja played the hero. Will Bharatiraja act again? Right from his first venture he has been acting in his own films in the Hitchcock tradition. But if he threatens to do a full length role again, distributors may refuse to touch the film.

THE surprise hit of the season is *Oru Talai Ragam*, a film packed with new talents. The film has Toopa playing the heroine opposite Shankar. A college campus serves as the background for the film. This film is expected to thrill viewers of all shades.

NANDITA BOSE, the Bengali actress who was threatening to make it big in Malayalam films is sitting idle these days. What went wrong? The grapevine tells me that she was in the habit of putting on silly airs. Malayalam producers believe that since they can have more popular artistes like Zarina Wahab, why bother about Nandita?



Jayamalini Dancing Gossip girl

THE WORLD

Thar' she blows!

This Monroe was no Marilyn, however hard she might try to show herself off as one. In fact, this skirt-blowing, leg-baring girl is Constance Forslund, who is starring as the one and only Marilyn Monroe. She showed a lot of leg during the filming of *This Year's Blonde*, the first in the series of three NBC-TV presentations, based on Garson Kamin's *Moviola*, the bestseller which deals with the life of Marilyn Monroe. Ms Forslund recreated the famous skirt-blowing episode, originally taken from the movie, *Seven Year Itch*. In the film Marilyn Monroe's skirt had blown thanks to a mischievous wind, but Ms Forslund adopted a different technique to achieve the same result: she stood



on the West 50th Street Metro airshaft. And as the skirt blew, photographers lost no time.

C(anary) major

Gone are the days when birds were used to send wartime letters and messages from one place to another. Birds are now used for peaceful purposes and being trained in the arts. Indeed, in the Ukraine, a canary singing group has come into existence and ornithologists are breeding and training

canaries that can sing the bass for the group. This singing group has not confined its chirping to light music but is trying its beaks at classical music too, for the repertoire includes the *Moonlight Sonata* and some Russian folk songs. One wonders who the conductor is going to be.

Royal air farce

This time it is the RAF Buccaneer nuclear bombers that do not seem to fly. During a recent exercise with the United States Air Force, one of the British bombers crashed in the Nevada desert with a broken wing caused by fatigue cracks while trying to evade some American fighters in

a simulated low level air fight. The poor performance by the Buccaneers have led RAF officials to consider scrapping the entire force. This no doubt will deal a blow to Europe and the North Atlantic that would be left without the services of the highly trained squadrons till 1982.

Inscrutable ailment

That old historical tormentor of travellers—the Sphinx—is in torment. Nearly 5,000 years of harsh weather has made the Sphinx lose its beautiful neck, paws and sides. They are all crumbling and adding to the sands of the pyramids.

The hullabaloo was raised by the Egyptian newspaper, *Al Ahram* which said: "Whether we like it or not, the Sphinx is sick and his condition—despite official statements—is not reassuring". This raised a hue and cry in the Parliament. According to the newspaper the causes for the Sphinx's flaking and crumbling skin were sandstorms, wind, rain, rising underground water and pollution from cars. When the issue went to the Parliament, the Minister of Culture Mr Mansour Hassan said that there was nothing to worry about and that he was waiting for a more detailed diagnosis. Egypt was going to sign a contract with Sweco, a Swedish engineering firm for a thorough examination.

See no cleavage



There she was! Bowtching Ms Zsa Zsa Gabor in a very provocative dress with an even more plunging neckline. She arrived hand in hand with Tony Randall and together they made an odd couple for the roundup benefit of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation at Madison Square Garden in New York City on May 9. It was only natural for the photographers to start clicking their cameras. Poor Tony Randall. Seeing all the attention the lady was getting he whipped off his huge Stetson and did the only thing he could think of: cover her neckline.

Grey-t

Japanese citizens simply do not think the same way as other people do. And it needed a Japanese to tell us that. The *Japanese Brain* is a book written by Dr Tadanobu Tsunoda of the Tokyo Medical and Dental Research Institute and according to him his countrymen's grey cells function unlike those of others. He has 20 years of research to back him up. Sound and language interpretations function

differently in Western and Japanese brains. The learned doctor says that the Japanese can hear rippling water or the sound of a cricket more clearly than anyone else since Japanese brains integrate all the functions of mechanical and musical sounds. That is why, according to Dr Tsunoda, the Japanese have a priority for sentiment and culture while Westerners stress more on logic and ethics.

No queer're

Times are bad for the gay community. Homosexuals can be dismissed from jobs if they are discovered to be gays, an employment appeals tribunal has recently decided in Britain. Naturally, the gay community fears that they will face a lot more persecution in later years. The tribunal had upheld the dismissal of a 43-year-old handyman since he was supposed to have "indulged in homosexuality."

Women mostly ignored

By S. URMILA MAJUMDAR



"FROM a political and economic point of view women in China enjoy equal positions with men. The Constitution, Party and State shows great concern for the well being for the women."

"Abortion is legal. Anyone can have any abortion like anyone can have a bad tooth pulled out."

These are two of the few statements that Mrs Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud makes about Chinese women in her book. Mrs Moudud first lets us know of her desire to study "especially the women" in China; then we discover that she devotes no more than 10 of the 89 pages in her book to the topic.

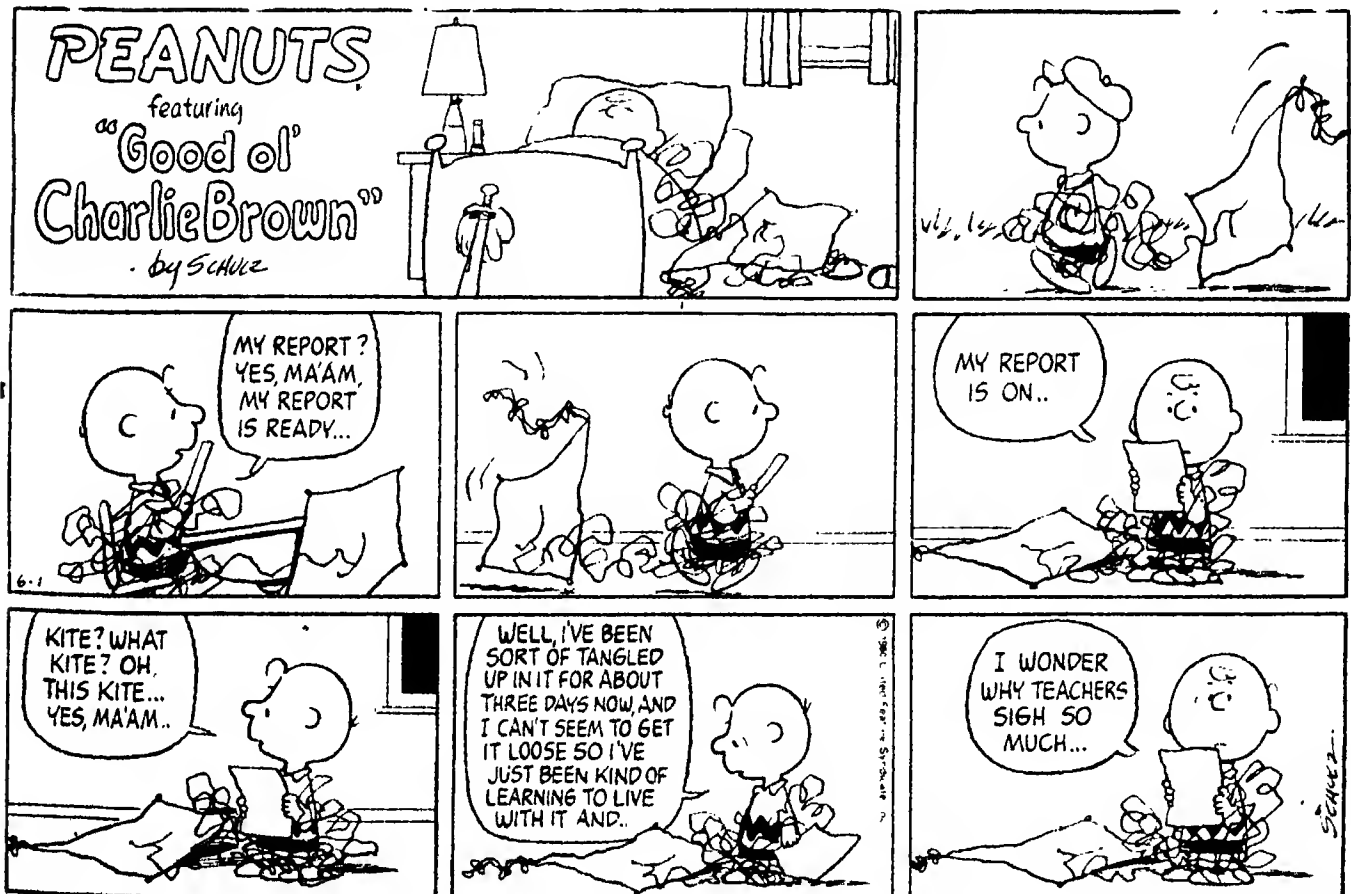
Even in the first chapter one begins to have doubts about the central theme of the book. There is a section titled 'Federation of Chinese Women' which takes up six pages, the longest passage in the entire book dealing with women in China. But all other references made by the author on the topic are confined to scattered statements. Indeed, so scanty is her treatment of women and, comparatively, so exhaustive her treatment of many other things that the book could well have been called anything from 'Nature in China', to 'China, the Land of Tea'.

The book is simply a Bangladeshi Minister's wife's diary, and not a particularly brilliant diary at that. Even the descriptions lack the insight one associates with class writing.

This is more a teenager's diary.

However, as a travelogue, the book might have some value, for the author provides details on scenic spots, folklore, the arts and cuisine of China, and succeeds in informing us, albeit en passant, that the post liberation period has provided women with better opportunities in all spheres of activity.

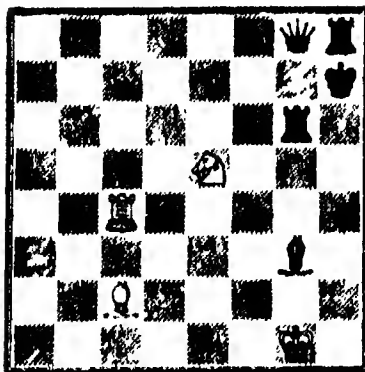
(Women in China by Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, Vikas, Rs 45)



chess



K. A. Mikaze (Black) to move



Harry Kiri (White)

THE Japanese grandmaster K. A. Mikaze can get himself mated from almost any position with remarkable speed. Take the position he reached as Black against Harry Kiri in the Yokohama League last month. Harry, who loves to sacrifice his pieces, had already sacrificed most of them by the time they reached the position in the diagram. He would have resigned long ago, but he knew of Mikaze's reputation.

While Mikaze (Black) was thinking about his move, Harry spotted that if it were his (ie White's) turn he could try 1. R-N2 allowing 2. R-KR4 double check and mate. He then noticed that the fact that it was Black's move in the position made it much more difficult for Mikaze to walk into a mate in two. But Harry was underestimating his opponent's resourcefulness.

Mikaze moved. Harry hadn't expected this one and thought for a long time over his reply, which made his opponent very impatient, so much so that when Harry eventually did make his move, Mikaze banged down his reply without thinking. Harry glanced at the board and coolly delivered mate in one!

How did the game end?

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



THE Italians showed more enterprise than their American opponents on this deal from the qualifying round of the world championship last year. With better inspiration in the play, they might have gained points instead of losing them.

Dealer, North. Game all.

♠ Q 10 9 3

♥ -

♦ J 8 4

♣ A J 10 6 3 2

N

W

E

S

♠ 7 6 5
♥ 8 7 5 4
♦ 9 8 3 2
♣ K 5

♠ A K J 8 4 2
♥ 9 3
♦ K 7
♣ Q 8 4

♠ -
♥ A K Q J 10 8 2
♦ A Q 10 5
♣ 9 7

When Laura, for Italy, opened One Spade, Soloway overcalled with Four Hearts and played there. This was the bidding at the other table:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Franco	Kantar	De Falco	Eisenberg
1♠	-	No	1♠
3♠	No	3♠	No
4♥	No	3NT	No
5♥	No	5♠	No
	No	No	No

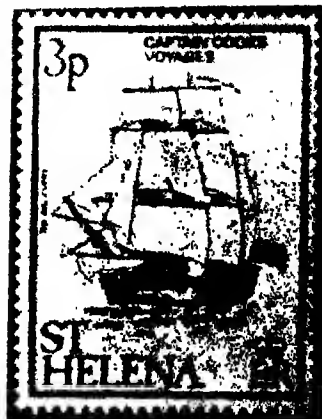
West led a spade. South ruffed, drew trumps, and led a low club, on which Kantar smartly played the King. De Falco won with the Ace and used his only entry to lead the Jack of diamonds. Eventually he had to lose the fourth round of diamonds to West's 9.

It would have been slightly better play for declarer to duck the first round of clubs. The best exit for West is a second club to dummy's Ace. South knows the heart distribution and can read East for ♠ Q x x. If he can judge that East holds six spades, then he must be 6-2-2-3 and the right card from dummy is a low diamond, not the Jack.

Winning Card Play, by Hugh Kelsey (Gollancz Master Bridge Series, £5.95), is thoroughly workmanlike as one would expect. Casting no aspersions, for great minds think alike, it did strike me that the format and contents bore a cousinly relationship to Dormer's and my 'Play of the Cards'. Improve Your Opening Leads, by Hugh Kelsey and John Matheson (Gollancz, £3.50), contains none of the usual sterile injunctions but a series of instructive problems, with the full deal shown in the answer. In a quiet way, one of the best of recent books.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



It is almost a century since Captain Cook first appeared on a postage stamp. A series issued in New South Wales in 1888 to mark the centenary of the colony included a 4d stamp showing his portrait. Since then hun-

dreds of stamps have been issued in his honour, most of them in the Pacific islands which he visited during his three voyages of exploration. The Discovery, one of the two ships in which he made his last expedition, is featured on a recent stamp from St. Helena.

C. W. HILL

quiz



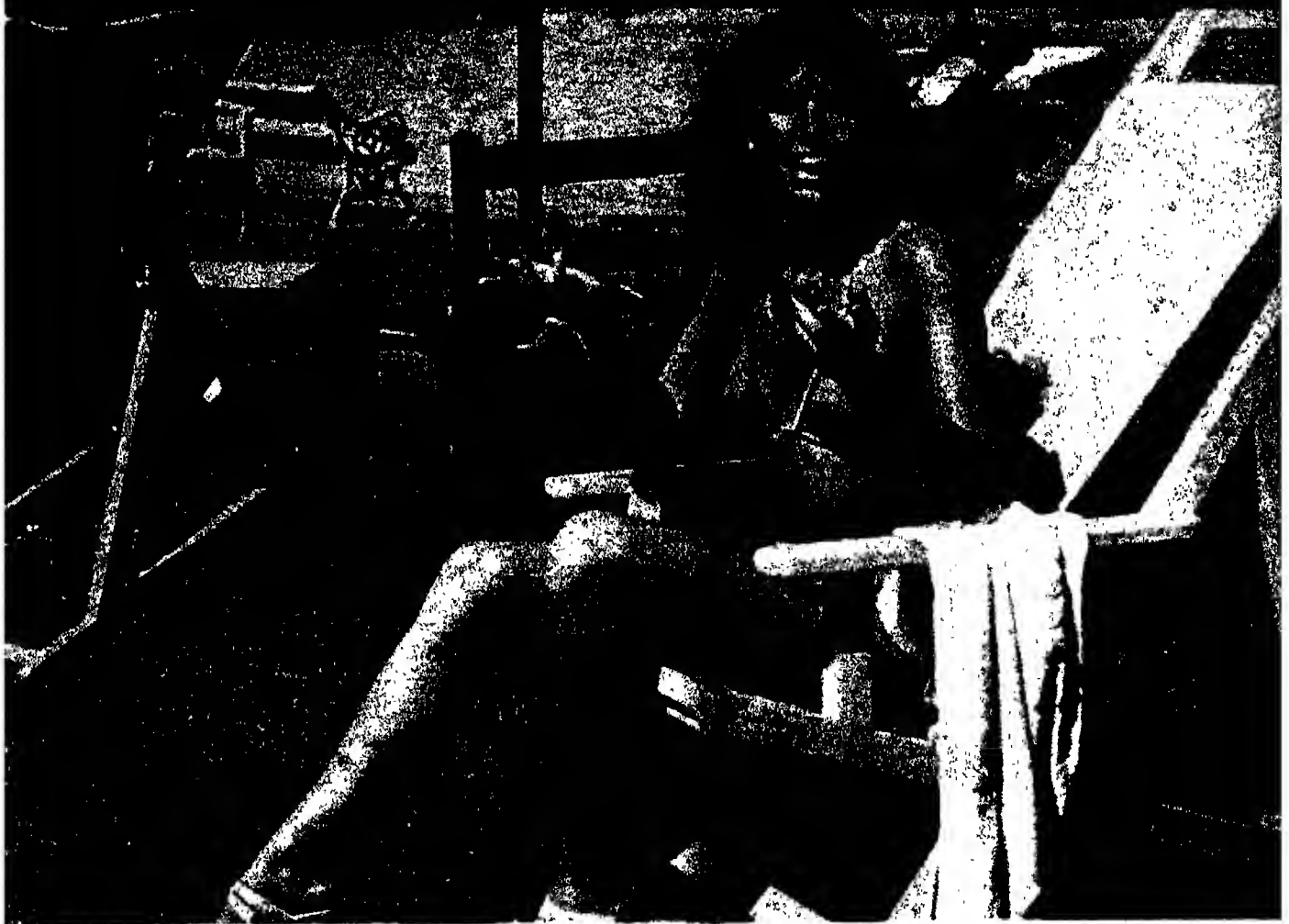
QUESTIONS

1. When did the CIA officially come into being?
2. What is eurhythmics?
3. Which is the first English anti-novel?
4. What is the currency of Guam?
5. What is a keratometer used for?
6. What is a frame-story?
7. What is a Sijo?
8. Who was the first swimmer to win three individual titles in the Olympic Games?
9. Which is Federico Fellini's first movie?
10. What is the 'Autumn Sonata'?
11. Why is chamber music so called?
12. Who is the pioneer of the Expressionist movement in music?
13. What are the names of the satellites of Neptune?
14. What is Tossing the Caber?
15. What is trampolining?

1. September 18, 1947.
2. The art of interpreting music through body movements.
3. Stems, Tristram Shandy.
4. The US dollar.
5. An instrument for measuring the curvature and diameter of the cornea.
6. A story which contains one or more stories.
7. A Korean verse form, chanted to the accompaniment of music.
8. Debbie Meyer of the USA who won the 200, 400 and 800 metres freestyle at the 1968 Mexico Olympics.
9. The white shellfish (1952).
10. An Ingmar Bergman film.
11. Because it is music for small instrumental groups and best heard in small rooms, not in a hall.
12. Arnold Schoenberg, a German musician, in 1910.
13. Triton and Nereid, discovered by W. Lassell in 1846.
14. It is a sport in Scotland where a tree trunk is tossed.
15. A sport involving a series of bounces in air off a sprung-nylon webbed bed supported on a frame.

ANSWERS

"I love your 'V.I.P.' As a true Greek Orthodox,
I fall for everything with the Classic line!"



It was a beautiful beginning. That spontaneous compliment to Classic, our prestige moulded luggage range, was all we could have hoped for.

But that was Delphina Mixopoulous.* A mixture of old-world Oracle and jet-setting beauty.

"Your 'V.I.P.' will go places" she said, in the same occult tone.

"It already has" we said confidently. "'V.I.P.' goes to 48 countries around the world!"

"I'm sure I've taken it to 49—at the very least!" quipped the shipping heiress who found it difficult to stay away from water. Even on land.

"The most beautiful thing about 'V.I.P.' is its clean line. Classic—that's a good name for it."

"We also have another range—'Travelite'" we informed her.

"Some people can travel light", she shrugged. "Me, I take along a dozen suitcases or more. All Classics."

"Of course, I always take a bit of Greece with me wherever I go—just in case

I feel a little homesick," she confessed. "So I choose the 'V.I.P.' blue of the Mediterranean sky, the green of the olive groves and the gold of the Grecian sunshine..."

"We've built one of the largest luggage factories in the world" we said modestly.

"That's splendid" she enthused. "We Greeks love monuments to everything. Even success."

"Of course" we said, "in today's world, practicality is

important. So we build our 'V.I.P.' really tough."

"That's how they survive all my epic voyages" she exclaimed with an admiring smile. "My next Odyssey is to Africa...and I've got my 'V.I.P.' suitcases packed and ready for it."

"We're sure you'll like our Carry-ons" we said.

"Well" she joked, "there

are some who say Greeks love to carry on. Regardless! That, of course, is another of those Greek Myths."

"We hope you will return to India soon" we said.

"Nai! Nai!" she replied.

"I most certainly will! I've got to visit so many good friends. Like you."

Seeing our confusion she explained that 'nai' was 'yes' in Greek. Now, you know how the expression talking Greek arose!

We said a regretful goodbye, observing that nobody could now talk about the Greek influence in India and think only of Alexander the Great!

* To protect the privacy of our 'V.I.P.' customers, it has been necessary to conceal their actual identities.


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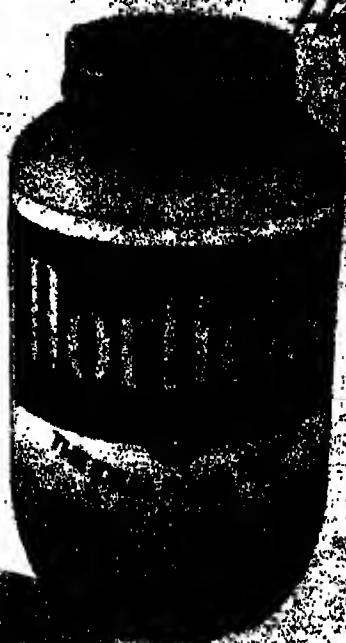




Most mothers are concerned about
their children getting enough nourishment.
But not Suchitra...

*"That's because I give them
Horlicks every day. Ever since my doctor
recommended Horlicks, I've made it
a daily habit for my children.
I know Horlicks helps them stay
fit and healthy."*

*"Are you a
Horlicks mother too?"*



...of Horlicks
It is a source of
protein, iron and
vitamin B12. It
keeps you healthy
through the
years. That's why I
recommend Horlicks
to build up your
family's health and
keep them active day
after day.



Beginning June 1

This week the Sun alone is in Taurus. Mercury and Venus are in Gemini. Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu and Mars are conjoined in Leo. Neptune and Uranus are in Scorpio. Ketu alone is in Aquarius. The Moon will be moving through Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces from Sagittarius.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) This week your affairs make good progress despite some anxiety and annoyance.

Your health may need an extra care. Much will depend on how you make the decisions. Your family life may create problems which may in turn affect the financial front. Check all extravagant tendencies. Wait for important letters before taking a decision. You will make new friends. Good dates: 3, 5 and 9. Lucky numbers: 2 and 3. Favourable direction: South.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) In the early part of this week you will gain on the financial front. Favours

from high authority are likely. Elderly relatives will prove helpful, but money-matters need careful handling. Guard yourself against extravagance and imposition. Eschew speculation and avoid changes. A friend from the opposite sex may betray you. Good dates: 1, 2, 3 and 4. Lucky numbers: 1, 10 and 5. Favourable directions: West and South.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) This is an important, eventful week for you. Property-dealings and speculation are well-signified. A good

time for romance and marriage. Go for all kinds of changes. Women folk may prove helpful but they may hinder progress. You may get entangled in needless quarrels. But gains on the financial front are predicted. A secret matter will progress. Good dates: 2, 3, 5 and 6. Lucky numbers: 3, 9 and 8. Favourable directions: South and East.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Exercise tact and patience in all your business transactions. Seek and act upon

the advice of the elders. Guard against disputes. Avoid change. Safeguard your health and that of your family. Do not throw discretion to the winds. Be cautious in speech and correspondence. A sudden sickness may upset your plans. Keep your temper under control. Take care of your valuables. Good dates: 2, 4 and 7. Lucky numbers: 1 and 8. Favourable direction: North.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) New friendships and pleasant relationships are likely. Your own health and that of

your family will improve. This week is favourable for marriage and dealings with elders. Make hay while the sun shines. You will gain on the financial front in unexpected ways. A good time for travel. Letters from distant places will bring good news. A friend may betray you. Good dates: 1, 4 and 6. Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8. Favourable directions: East and North-west.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) Moderate success in money-matters is predicted. But do not be

careless in business interviews and correspondence. New friends enter your life and contribute much to your happiness. Children and womenfolk may cause some anxiety. Guard against over optimism. If you are careful, luck will surely smile on you. Good dates: 2, 4, 5 and 7. Lucky numbers: 5, 3, 7 and 9. Favourable directions: North-west and South.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) Success on certain fronts is predicted. You will gain financially, often

unexpectedly. But guard against deception from women folk. Do not enter into arguments with colleagues. Postpone courtship and marriage. Concentrate more on business affairs. Adopt novel methods for success in business. Wait for important letters. Good dates: 1, 2, 5 and 6. Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3. Favourable direction: West.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) This week may be somewhat disappointing. Problems on the financial

front and complexities in business are likely. But new friendships will contribute to your happiness. You need patience and self-confidence to get through the difficulties. Seek and act upon the advice of friends and elders. Your own intuition should also prove very helpful. Good dates: 4, 5 and 6. Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 7. Favourable direction: South.



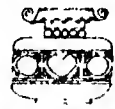
SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) You will experience a strange mixture of good and ill

fortunes. Meet unexpected loss and anxiety with courage. Postpone courtship, marriage and other changes. Do not be careless in your business affairs. Eschew doubtful friendships and concentrate on your profession. A new friend of the opposite sex will contribute to your happiness. Good dates: 3, 5, 6 and 7. Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 10. Favourable directions: West and North.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) You will have an active, happy and successful

week. You will prosper in business. Good fortune on all fronts is predicted although you may be faced with disagreements. Curb impetuosity and check irritations. Push your affairs to the utmost. An old friend will come to your rescue. Check all extravagant tendencies. Do not gamble for high stakes. Good dates: 3, 4, 5 and 8. Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 8. Favourable direction: East.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Success and happiness will be your portion this week. This week

is favourable for love, marriage and other auspicious events. You may have to go on a pleasant journey. You will go through beneficial changes. Success of your children is predicted. Intellectual and artistic activities will keep you engaged. New friendships are also likely. Good dates: 1, 2, 3 and 6. Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 9. Favourable direction: North.



PISCES (February 23 — March 20) Success, good fortune and happiness are predicted. You will benefit through

elderly women and business colleagues. Your own originality and business acumen will also help you to succeed. You will gain through unexpected sources. Friends from the opposite sex will prove helpful. Watch your finances. Good dates: 1, 3, 5 and 8. Lucky numbers: 4 and 8. Favourable direction: South.

M. B. RAMAN

Summerboon

from Binny



Bold and pastel colours. In genuine polyester blends. Soft sheer fabrics ideal for blouses and dress materials. We've got them all in our special summer collection.

Ask for our New Apsara, Loyal Skipper and Snow Peak in 80/20 blend. Viking in 50/50 and Triple Bee. Remember, Binny gives you only genuine polyester blends. Besides, we also offer you a variety of designs.



BINNY
polyester blend shirtings

this india

prize rs. 30 for the entry given first

without comment



CALCUTTA: The ladies compartment of the Bandel-Howrah Local was the venue of a unique farewell meeting on Friday (May 16) morning. The recipient was Mrs Hemlata Devi, a school teacher who had been travelling in that train daily for the past 42 years. The participants were her fellow commuters, women going to work in Calcutta. Friday was her day of retirement when she boarded the train for the last time. The meeting was perfect in every detail, supervised by Mrs Sovana Ghosh, a senior member of the commuting fraternity. Another senior member was elected president of the meeting. There was an opening song and speeches recalling Mrs Hemlata Devi's long association with the daily morning journey every day. She was given presents and a scroll. Then with the closing song the function was over—a function that not many perhaps knew about, but those who did would remember for ever—*The Statesman* (D N Chopra, Ranchi)

COCHIN: An institute awarding fake diploma certificates in medical laboratory technology has been unearthed, say police claim. The institute has for the past three years been selling diploma certificates, purported to have been issued by leading doctors along with character certificates and record books to "trainees" to meet the growing demand for medical laboratory technicians in Gulf countries, police said. The existence of the Institute at nearby Kaloore came to light when a "trainee" who had paid his fee for a three-month course in the morning and got his "certificate" in the evening reported the matter to the police. According to police the institute has been charging Rs 1,000 for a first class diploma certificate, Rs 700 for a second class and Rs 500 for a third class. Police took into custody the 'principal' and another person besides seizing some records and seals used by the institute — *The Hindu* (G. Sriram, Madras)

SALEM: It is never too late for Cupid, god of love, to make even a person who has lived the full three score and ten years, fall in love. This has been proved by the well attended marriage of 73-year-old Nagappan with 63-year-old Kolundai at Andikarai near Mettur last week. Nagappan, a washerman, had remained a bachelor, but Kolundai

was married four decades ago but was deserted by her husband. Her only daughter is the mother of three. The two had met at a dhabbi khana and it was love at first sight—*The Hindu* (Chandra Manoharan, Ootacamund)

GWALIOR: An American girl sat on fast outside the Gwalior Central Jail in sympathy with the nine dacoits who have been on indefinite fast here since May 1 demanding their release. Miss Sari Bond who is impressed by the Gandhian philosophy, sat with two workers of the Gandhi Seva Ashram—*Deccan Chronicle* (Dr S. Suresh Babu, Nizamabad)

NEW DELHI: A suit pending for the last 28 years is to come up in a court here later this month for hearing of final arguments. The suit was filed on Dec. 11, 1952 under the Displaced Persons Act by the late Rai Sahib Prithvi Raj, a contractor, claiming about Rs 2 lakh from Jamia Millia Islamia University and its Vice-Chancellor for having constructed a teachers' training hostel on his land. The issues in the case were framed in 1956. The recording of evidence running into 2,300 pages, was concluded on March 30, 1971. About 15 judicial officers have dealt with the case so far. An equal number of pleaders have been replaced by both the parties. A sub-judge who initially heard the case, is now a judge of the Delhi High Court, while another sub-judge who had heard it has since retired after serving as High Court judge — *The Hindustan Times* (B. B. I. Sharma, New Delhi)

KARNAL: The Block Development office at Radaur, 50 km from here, is the scene of a drama which has become a source of amusement in the area. According to authentic sources, Mr Jawahar Lal, Block Development Officer, was transferred from Radaur and his successor, Mr Vijay Sharma, took over on May 5. But Mr Jawahar Lal got his transfer order stayed. Now both have placed their chairs facing each other in the office. Both are signing the files and giving orders. One of them has taken charge of the cash and the other has charge of the office record. The office staff are in a fix as to whom they should obey. The people of the area do not know who they should approach for their problems. Both claim to be the real Block Development Officer — *The Tribune* (R. N. Sulthan, Chandigarh)

ROORKIE: A quarrel over 50 paise cost a young woman her nose. The police said a woman demanded 50 paise from her husband here last evening. The man refused. There was an exchange of hot words and in a fit of rage the man chopped off her nose. The chopped-off nose was later handed over to the police—*Times of India* (S. R. Swamy, Tuticorin)

WHAT the Assamese want to do to the non-Assamese is, in essence, what Idi Amin did to the Indians in Uganda—Rahul Singh in *Business India*

SOME anti-nationals were active in Assam, fomenting trouble and trying to disintegrate the country's solidarity—Mrs Indira Gandhi

IT was Mrs Gandhi who had a secret pact with the former Pakistani Prime Minister, the late Mr Bhutto, during the Simla conference—A. B. Vajpayee, ex-Foreign Minister

INDIA had in no way compromised its foreign policy as a result of these two meetings (with the then Foreign Ministers of Israel and South Africa)—Morarji Desai

THIS (Mr Sanjay Gandhi's interference in the administration) should be stopped in the interests of democracy and fair administration—Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal

NOBODY can bring up anyone unless you sustain yourself. Politics is not business management—C. M. Stephen on Sanjay Gandhi's rise to power

I AM feeling very comfortable that I have nothing to do this summer—H. N. Bahuguna after quitting the Congress (I)

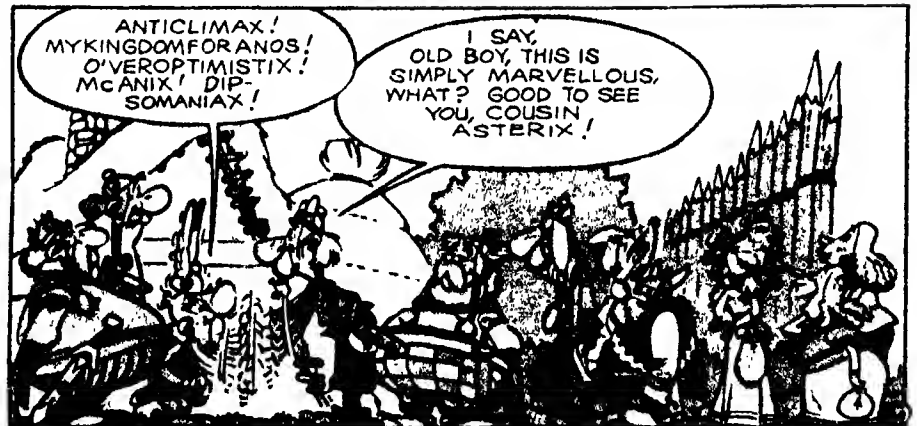
IT is not whether we win that matters, but the Jana Sangh should be taught a lesson—A Janata leader in Madhya Pradesh quoted in *The Statesman*

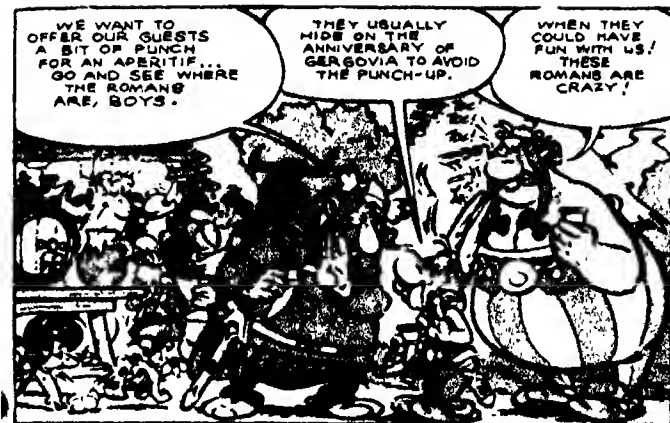
MANY of us in India tend to take Bangladesh for granted. Either we expect too much from Bangladesh or we give it up altogether—M. Dubey, the Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh

JUST like the Americans and the Chinese the Soviets would not want a hostile government being established along their frontiers. They may feel encircled by the USA and China and want to defend themselves—Eric Gonsalves, Secretary in the Indian External Affairs Ministry

I AM more concerned right now that they (journalists) should go on writing, because whether they write for or against, they bring more and more people to me. And once a person comes here, it is very difficult to escape—Acharya Rajneesh quoted in *Current*

I THINK I was born with a talent for humour. It isn't something I have learnt—Woody Allen quoted in *Debonair*





WE WANT TO OFFER OUR GUESTS A BIT OF PUNCH FOR AN APERITIF... GO AND SEE WHERE THE ROMANS ARE, BOYS.

THEY USUALLY HIDE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF GERGOVIA TO AVOID THE PUNCH-UP.

WHEN THEY COULD HAVE FUN WITH US! THESE ROMANS ARE CRAZY!



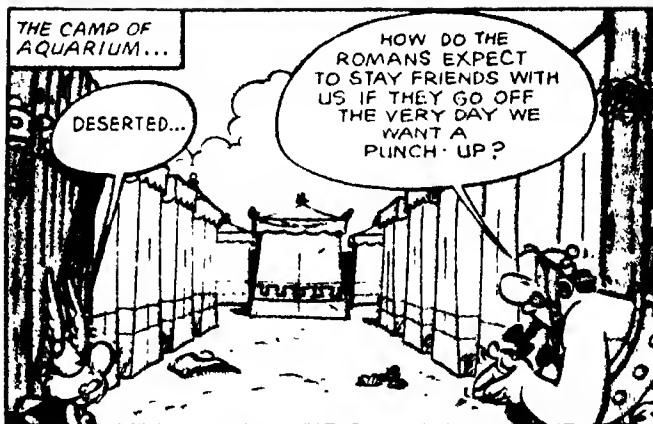
LET'S TRY THE CAMP OF LAUDANUM FIRST.

COME ON, DOGMATIX! YOU'LL BE SEEING POPE AGAIN!



IN THE CAMP OF LAUDANUM...

ANYONE AT HOME?



THE CAMP OF AQUARIUM...

DESERTED...

HOW DO THE ROMANS EXPECT TO STAY FRIENDS WITH US IF THEY GO OFF THE VERY DAY WE WANT A PUNCH-UP?



SOON AFTERWARDS...

AND THE CAMP OF COMPENDIUM WAS EMPTY TOO.

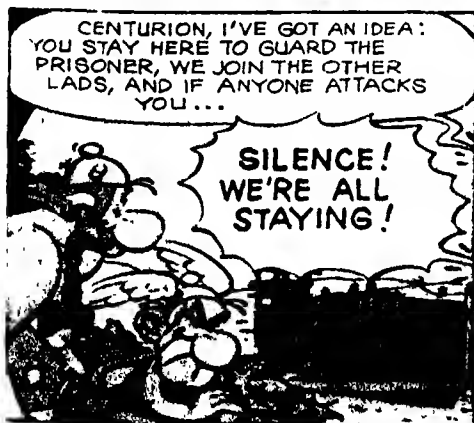
LET'S TRY TOTORUM, AND IF THERE'S NO ONE THERE WE'LL JUST HAVE TO PLAY CHARADES INSTEAD.



LISTEN!

LOOK HERE, CENTURION, THIS CHARACTER TURNS UP, HE USES US AS A LEFT LUGGAGE OFFICE, HE LEAVES US TO GET OURSELVES MASSACRED, AND YOU PUT UP WITH IT?

YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL WE HAVEN'T ANY CHOICE.

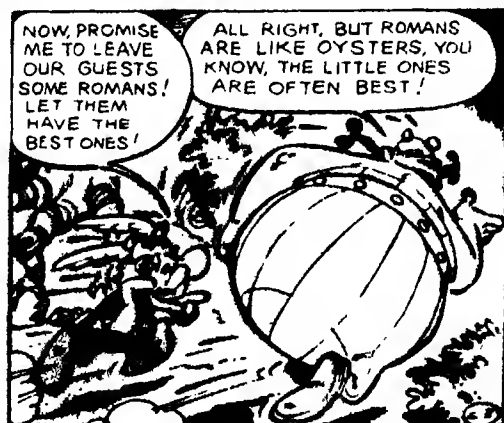


CENTURION, I'VE GOT AN IDEA: YOU STAY HERE TO GUARD THE PRISONER, WE JOIN THE OTHER LADS, AND IF ANYONE ATTACKS YOU...

SILENCE! WE'RE ALL STAYING!



THEY'RE THERE! GOOD FOR THEM! THIS'LL BE FUN... THEY'LL BE GLAD THEY STAYED!



NOW, PROMISE ME TO LEAVE OUR GUESTS SOME ROMANS! LET THEM HAVE THE BEST ONES!

ALL RIGHT, BUT ROMANS ARE LIKE OYSTERS, YOU KNOW, THE LITTLE ONES ARE OFTEN BEST!

SUNDAY NO BAR



Jagmohan

ON MAY 4, liquor shops in Delhi remained open for the first time on a Sunday after many months. Under Morarji Desai the capital had more dry days in a year than wet ones. In the new policy announced recently, the number of dry days has been drastically reduced and Sundays have been spared from the 'dry' net. But the initial happiness on the part of liquor enthusiasts of Delhi was shortlived. Though the state-owned liquor shops were open on May 4, there was no beer or whisky available. In some shops only brandy was available; hardly a cheering drink for a hot summer day. For a few

days following the "relaxed" liquor policy, only empty liquor shops were open in the capital because the wholesalers were holding on to their stocks, hoping for a hike in the prices. Actually, none of the top people in the Union Territory of Delhi, who are responsible for the implementation of the liquor policy—Lt. Governor Jagmohan, Excise Commissioner Jagdish Sagar, and the chief executives of the two government agencies responsible for liquor distribution, K. N. Sahani and B. Chatterjee—drink. But shouldn't they be a little kinder to their elbow-bending brethren?

SHIFTING FORTUNES

MANY government servants had been under a cloud during the days of the Janata raj, but now it is perhaps the turn of others. Ram-anathan, press officer to Charan Singh when the latter was Prime Minister, is now posted as a deputy press information officer in charge of photo features in the Press Information Bureau of the government. He was recently given a

notice by the government to "explain his conduct" during the Lok Dal regime although he was posted to the Prime Minister's office on government orders. Another unfortunate man is H. C. Bhargava, a senior superintendent of police posted with the Intelligence bureau. He was the man in charge of dealing with top opposition leaders like Nanaji Deshmukh

during the Emergency. During the Janata raj he was entrusted with the task of carrying out a raid on Mrs Gandhi's farmhouse at Mehrauli, on the outskirts of Delhi. As a result he has now been given marching orders from the capital and shunted off to Kohima. Professional hazards, perhaps.

DONNING NEW COLOURS

THE University of Delhi, which has on its rolls nearly one lakh students, has got a new vice-chancellor, Gurubaksh Singh, who comes from the Benaras Hindu University. The pro-vice-chancellor's post has gone to P. C. Mukherji, a 59-year-old retired don from Calcutta. Mukherji, a former principal of Presidency College, Calcutta, had worked with Gurubaksh Singh at the Central University, Hyderabad, a few years ago. Two other important posts of the University, having ranks equivalent to that of the pro-VC, — the Dean of Colleges and Director, South Campus, have gone to youngsters in the University fraternity. P. L. Malhotra (42) the younger brother of Lt. Governor Jagmohan, has been appointed the Dean of Colleges. Malhotra had been the principal of the College of Vocational Studies which has a student strength of around 400 and is one of the smallest constituent colleges of the University. If Malhotra has superseded many, then so has Abid. Ahmed (41) of the business studies department, who has bagged the prestigious South Campus directorship. So far Delhi University—despite many agitations by students, teachers and the karmacharis—has been able to maintain its reputation of being a university which conducts its examinations regularly and where academic years begin and end on time. One only hopes that the Benaras and Calcutta University culture will not be 'imported' to the University along with the dons.

NOTEWORTHY

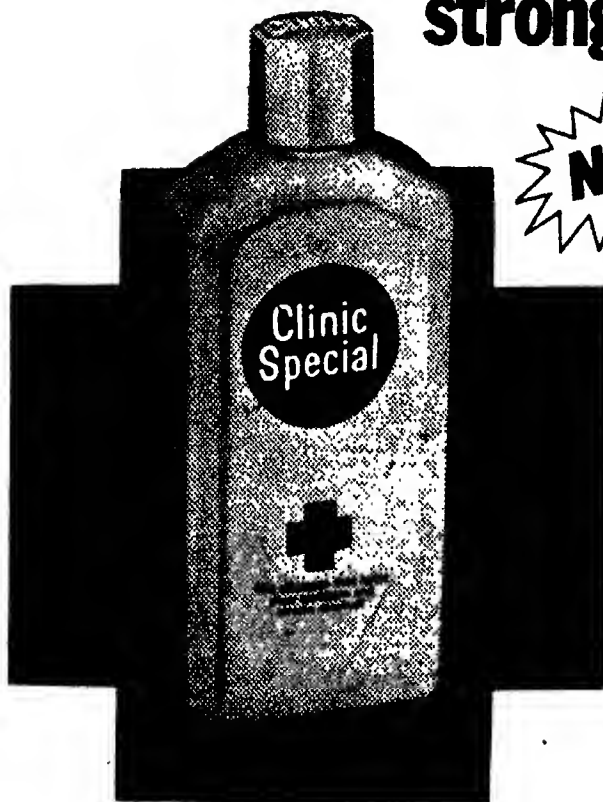
TAILPIECE: Overheard at a bureaucratic gathering in Delhi: There is a new nursery rhyme for bureaucrats.

All Joint Secretaries to prepare three notes; one for the Minister one for the dame and one for the little boy who lives down Safdarjung Lane.

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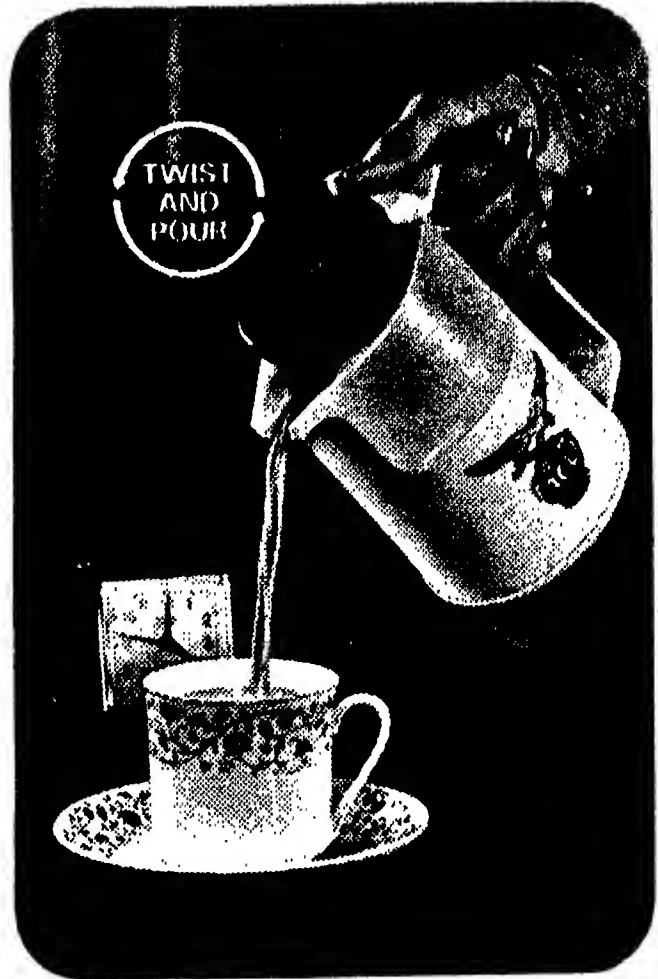
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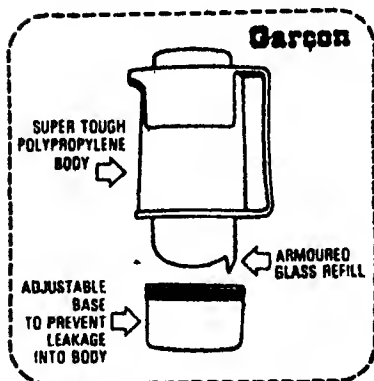
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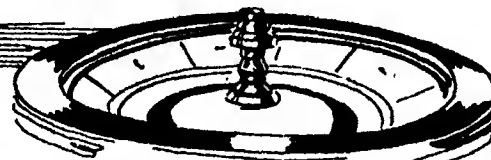


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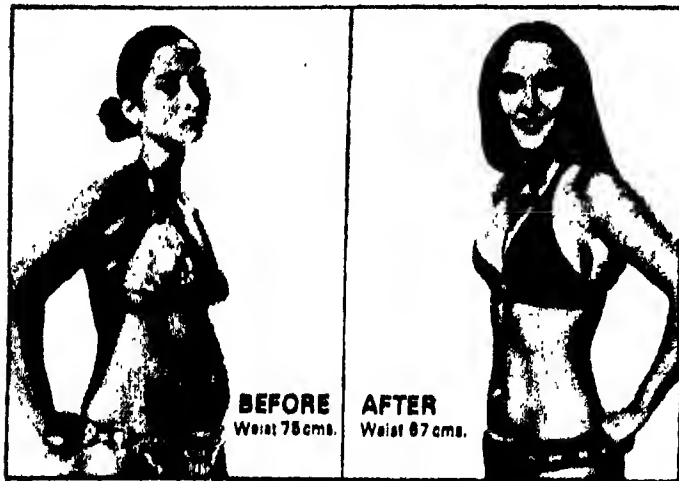


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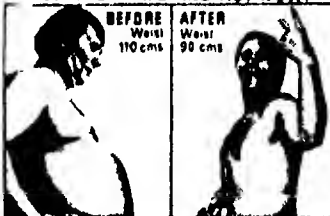
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In 1972 Jayaprakash Narayan brought about a spectacular surrender of Chambal dacoits who thereafter reformed and lived in an open jail. Today they are out and campaigning for political Parties, notably the Congress(I). The media and the popular imagination have given them a new glamour and the dacoit menace is slowly resurfacing through new small groups while the administration pretends that it is a thing of the past.

The carnage in Assam could not be stopped. In its most recent and violent phase, the agitation had claimed over 35 lives till the end of May. Why are the minorities so frightened that they have to now set up their own bodies? What is the significance of the ultimatums facing both the students and the centre?



The newly formed Film Development Corporation will not go against the art cinema. In fact the distinction between art and commercial cinema is spurious. One of the most natural expressions of human affection is kissing. Door-darsan and AIR should develop their managerial and technical talent and grow through functional autonomy. VASANT SATHE says this and more in an interview.

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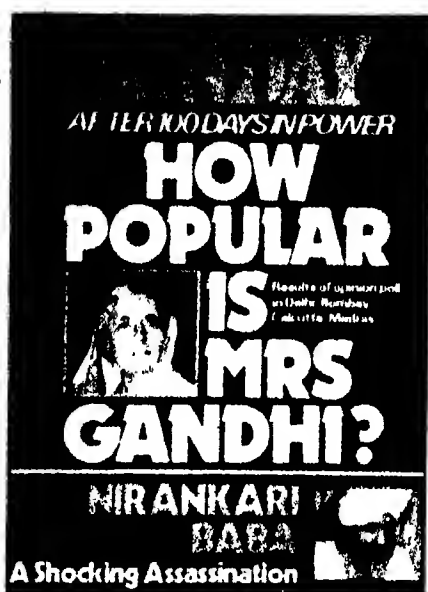
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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
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100 wasted days

M. J. AKBAR in "Where is the Government that works" (May 4) presents a clear and realistic picture of the problems faced by the new government. The parody of the slogan, "Na jaat par na baat par..." heard during the recent Lok Sabha elections, is a bitter satire on the present situation

faced by the people of this country. Those who hoped that Indira Gandhi was the only saviour of this country find themselves disillusioned. However, they are still silent and perhaps waiting for some miracle to happen after the Assembly polls.

Kanti Kumar Kaul, New Delhi.

M. J. AKBAR'S article seems to be a cheap criticism of the victory of the Congress(I) in the Lok Sabha polls. He has forgotten to mention the reconstitution of the Planning Commission which plays a basic role in a developing country. How can one blame Mrs Gandhi for the wrong policies of the previous governments which have brought about oil shortages and rising prices? The article is not at all balanced because the author has forgotten to mention the need for a strong and stable government at the Centre to tackle all types of challenges.

S. J. Quraishi, Bombay.

THE article was fantastic and provided ample facts about Mrs Gandhi's 100 days in power. She asked the people to elect a government that works and the people did the same. In fact, the present government of the mother and son does work but it is mainly to topple non-Congress (I) governments, transfer and victimise bureaucrats

and policemen who were appointed by the previous government. The present government also works in boosting the image of those Emergency loyalists. The people who made a hue and cry about the Narainpur incident have forgotten to talk about Parasbigha and similar incidents which happened even after Mrs Gandhi assumed office. The real miracle in Indian politics is neither the return of Mrs Gandhi to power nor that of Morarji Desai, but the fact that Mrs Gandhi is still popular among our people who have such short memories.

R. Bhaskaram, Tiruchirappalli.

M. J. AKBAR starts off with the Hindi limerick to warn Mrs Gandhi that all wouldn't be well with her in the days to come. I cannot appreciate the writer's intellectual assessment of the history of our time. Mrs Gandhi's return to power in '80 is very much unlike that of her coming to power after the elections in '71. The Janata had left no stone unturned to tarnish her image. So her first job was to establish anew her rapport with world leaders and refurbish her image abroad before she could make an attempt to tackle the glaring problems. She has done the first in her first 100 days. The Indian people understand her responsibilities

Visitor at Parties

PROPOS of M. J. Akbar's "Revolt against Mrs Gandhi" (May 4), ever since Mr Bahuguna was thrown out of the Chief Ministership of UP back in November, 1975, he has been casting around for a role for himself. This took him in quick order from the CFD to the Janata to the Lok Dal and, finally, after some persistent wooing which included an ostentatious visit to his house by Mrs Gandhi accompanied by Mr Sanjay Gandhi nicely calculated to tickle his ego, back to Congress (I). This was before the general elections. Mrs Gandhi having won it impressively, Mr Bahuguna's utility was at a discount and there appears to have been a deliberate decision to put him in his place. Whether Mr Bahuguna would have been troubled by the unhealthy trends in the functioning of the party and its government if he had found a suitable place in the Congress-I is a moot point. But there should be no hesitation anywhere in giving him a loud cheer on his prompt resignation of the Lok Sabha seat he had won on a label he can no longer subscribe to. This is in keeping with a democratic tradition so seldom honoured in the degraded state of our deflection-ridden politics.

Bakraj, Srinagar.

Outrageous

I WRITE to register my vehement protest at the gradual decline in the moral standards of your journal. This week (May 11) it has stooped to a new low with the publication of the most vulgar pictures with Khaas Baat. Readers like me will now think twice before purchasing SUNDAY as it is no longer a family magazine. I hope that you will not end up converting what was once such a homely magazine into just another porno magazine.

Sivaram Raja, Calcutta.

Hardly Gandhian

PRAFULLA MAHANTO, the fire-brand AASU president, has claimed that he is a "Gandhite" and that Gandhiji has inspired him very much. I have a feeling that Prafulla Mahanto's Gandhi is not the same man whom we know as Gandhiji. Our Gandhi says: "There is no room for race-hatred... Let that be our nationality". By declaring himself to be a Gandhite he is not only misleading others but also deceiving himself.

Nilima Sanyal, Barutpur, West Bengal.

Last chance

ALL the speculation and doubts aired in Bhola Chatterji article "Nepal: Re-enter democracy" (April 27) should be put to rest now that the Panchayat system with its proposed reforms has carried the day in the referendum. From an intellectual view-point the Panchayat politicians of course did not deserve to win but they really made it in the name of king and country. This is a singular victory for the king who had so far kept himself aloof and non-partisan. For the Panchayat system, this is the last chance to prove that it can help in the uplift of the masses.

Chatterji's assessment of M. P. Koirala is absolutely right. He is the Brutus in Nepal's politics. MP enjoyed wide-ranging de facto powers under King Tribhuwan who was a truly constitutional monarch. But what has he done with it? He just wasted the precious time and opportunities in political-family feuds with BP. However, the views on Dr Tulsi Giri are far from the truth. It is true that he got sacked more than once as PM but this was because of his clashes with 'all the king's men' who ran a parallel and more powerful government.

V. P. Maudgalya Dharan, Nepal

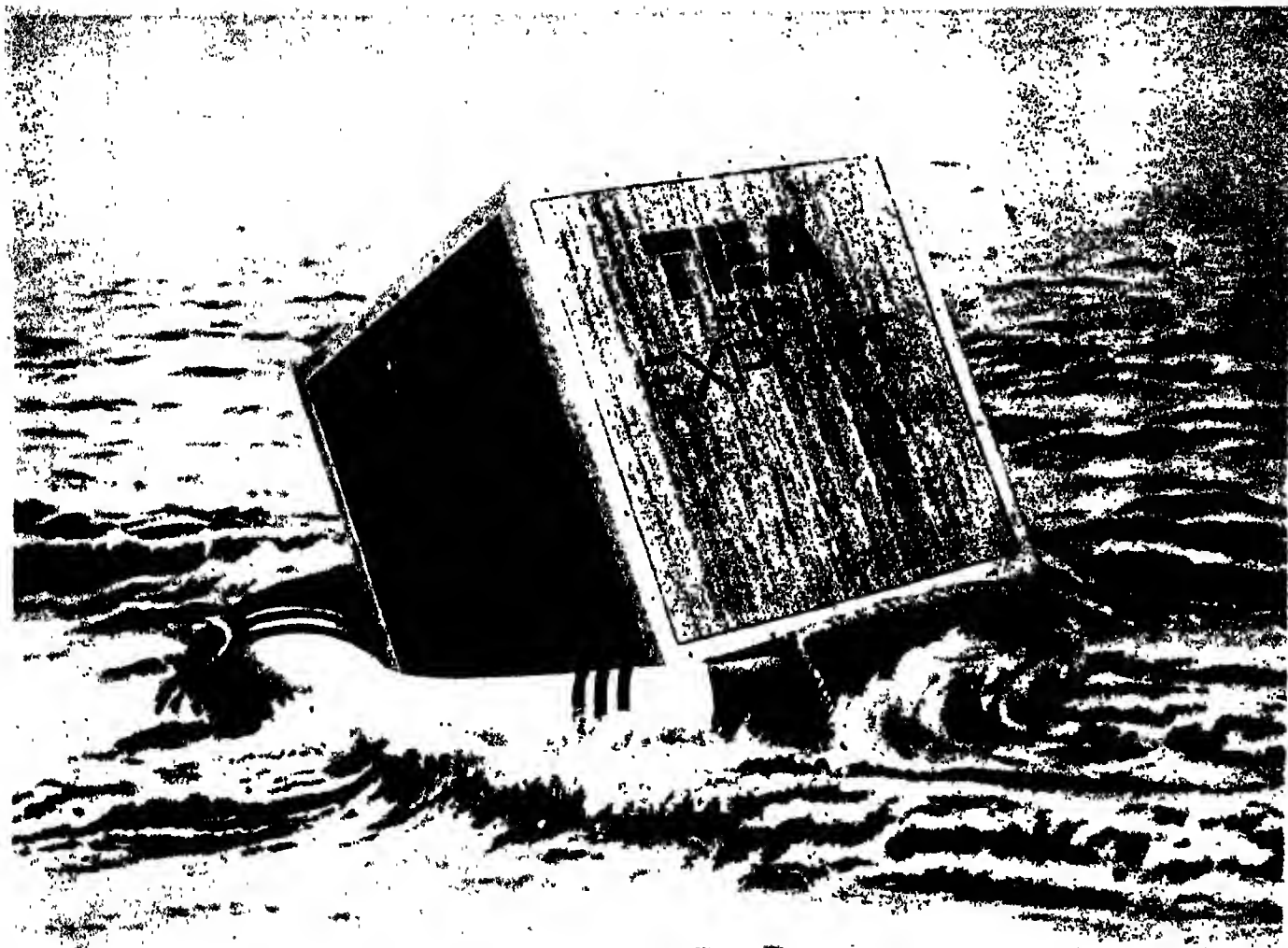
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and her handicaps. The opinion poll conducted by SUNDAY clearly points out to this fact.
P. G. N. Nayar, Kerala.

THE survey by the Pathfinders (May 4) has not only been timely but also interesting. But I would like to point out that it would have been more representative and meaningful if the rural people were also included. Despite the soaring prices and deteriorating law and order situation, the people are still inclined towards Mrs Gandhi's government. Not only the economy of the country was in shambles during the Janata regime it had also lost its image abroad. So the people still think that Mrs Gandhi will need some more time to set things right.

T. K. Roy, Howrah, West Bengal.

THANKS to M. J. Akbar for the cover story (May 4). The 100 days of Mrs Gandhi failed to bring down the prices, improve the law and order situation and resolve the Assam problem. Instead of paying attention to these immediate problems she is busy with the state Assemblies, transferring CBI officials and imposing a ban on strikes in Maharashtra and Gujarat. This is nothing but another facet of the Emergency.

Gautam Sinha, Hyderabad.

MAY I make a list of the highlights of Mrs Gandhi's first 100 days in power? Prices of all essential commodities have gone up, law and order situation has deteriorated. Press is thoroughly suppressed, the cases filed against the Emergency stalwarts have been promptly withdrawn, the Ministers are acting as mere puppets and the less said about the government-run media the better. To cap it all, the Assam crisis is staring us in our face without any chance of being resolved. Perhaps, there are more such achievements coming on our way.
K. Vajreshwar, Bombay.

FOR your kind information, Mrs Gandhi had no role to play in the first 100 days of the Congress government. The man behind the scene was none other than Sanjay Gandhi himself who had the dominant role to play in the government.

Ashok Kumar, Jaipur.

THE opinion poll (May 4) on Mrs Gandhi's 100 days in power provides an interesting study of her government and of her own personality. It is a fact that within this period we have not seen any dynamic change as we expected. But certainly a lot has been done compared to the previous government. It is not possible for her to take drastic steps. The opposition would then brand it as an Emergency trend. On the other hand, if she takes it easy she would be blamed for her inactivity.

R. K. Gujati, Siliguri.

Lonely hearts' club

THE great thing about the article on loneliness by Pritish Nandy (April 6) is that it is honest, provocative and courageous. It attacks the deadwood in our society with the typical honesty of a poet—a great poet! After publishing so much of contemporary trash, Sunday has now published at least one outstanding essay which can be preserved.

R. Mukherjee, Howrah.

PRITISH NANDY tries to grapple with modern man's worst curse. Philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and artists have tried to unravel the mystique that surrounds the malady of loneliness or alienation and offer solution without much success. Loneliness is the result of a lack of love and concern. And it is essentially a malady of industrial society whose philosophy, motto and driving force is selfishness, acquisitiveness, competition and mammon worship. So it is natural that modern man is also dogged by a sense of guilt. We do not see the malaise of loneliness and alienation among the tribals and the rural folks who lead a simple life at a slow pace. Also, among the deeply religious we do not find any loneliness.
George Verghese, Bangalore.

PRITISH NANDY's exposition of the mystery of loneliness is eloquent and characteristically elegant. In the more moody and choosy moments of his early life that the poet has shared with us one discovers the quest (and ultimate victory) of an imaginative mind. Man essentially lives within; one who has this in-built world of creativity—young or old—is never alone. When such a person appears to suffer in silence and isolation he is indeed at his best as a creative artist. The poet is perfectly right that to escape the ruin of loneliness you must choose either love or religion. To me they are synonymous: love without religious devotion makes one even more lonely. It is only a very transient balm to a aching soul. With devotion it is permanent sunshine. Religion with discipline but no love is a desert.

In our craze for more and more material possessions we have denied the limits of growth and precipitated our own doom. Even the weakest has an unspoken lingering pain all

confided to himself. The only cure to this corroding disease that Dag Hammarskjöld has prescribed and Mr Nandy has thoughtfully extracted is that loneliness could "spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for."

Mankumar Sen, Calcutta.

I DISAGREE with Pritish Nandy, despite the irresistible charm of the notion, that loneliness is as universal as he makes it out. My acquaintance with humanity is nowhere near as wide as the author's. The loneliness of the Indian widow or the businessman would respond to the simple therapy of spunk and religion. But this should not be bunched with the loneliness of the sensitive artist. The nuances and subtleties of a basic angst that impinges on and suffuses the psyche of the few is seldom shared by the many who dwell in bovine contentment. The matinee-going housewife is far from lonely. She actually enjoys the celluloid make-believe. It is the misfits that strain to produce the gems. One more point. Raghu Rai's pictures were excellent and told the same story without words.

T. R. Ramalingam, Calcutta.

I AGREE with Mr Nandy's statement that we are all moving towards our destinies like an arrow tracing its charted course but differ regarding the blurring of the dividing line between the good and the bad. Morality is a value and concept and varies from person to person. We mortals have never been able to distinguish between the good and the bad. Besides, morality today is taking the same course as it had taken in the past. Christ was betrayed with a kiss.

Serosh Haroutunian, Calcutta.

LONELINESS is not merely a feature of modern times but of all times, a part of the human predicament. No society, ancient or modern, could relieve the agony which is inherent in human nature. But loneliness in modern times is different. In spite of the gains, modern society has boosted the ruthless forces of egotism which have estranged one man from another. Besides, the wild goose longs to belong, but no modern ideology has given him that.

Syed Kawsar Jamal, Siliguri.

Lawbreakers

THE extent to which the police can go berserk is really shocking. Such brutal acts of the police, the custodian and the guardian of law, have almost become a regular feature. The police carnage at Islampur has forced us to believe that the police are no longer the protectors of innocents but the perpetrators of crimes. The police personnel indulge themselves in all sorts of inhuman, unlawful activities including murders.

A. K. A. C. Chakraborty, Bombay

Pretty intelligent

SUNDAY dated May 4 was one of the best I have read in recent times. All the articles were superb but the best was the extract "The real Sophia". The filmstar's ideas on various subjects just go to establish the fact that behind a glamorous face lies the mind of an intellectual.

K. Vaitheeswaran, Madras.

THE photographs of Sophia Loren were really superb. Thank you.
Amrit Lall, Bhubaneswar.

EX-DACOITS' CAMPAIGN



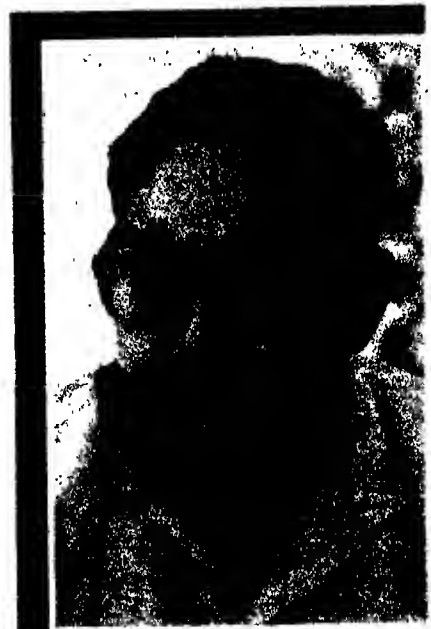
Guns are common in Chambal



"It is better to kill ten men than one man. If you kill one man, you are hanged as a murderer, but if you kill ten men then you become a dacoit. You can then surrender, and become a hero": a saying in Madhya Pradesh's Chambal valley.

EIGHT years ago the late Jayaprakash Narayan masterminded a historic surrender of some of the most notorious dacoits ravaging the Chambal valley. These dacoits were placed in an "open" jail as reward for their surrender; they lived comfortably there, without any of the penalties which a normal criminal has to face being imposed on them. The crime level came down for a while. But in the past few years, new gangs have replaced the old ones. And some of the old and

Left, an ex-dacoit and below, Mohar Singh



The present and former dacoits of Chambal may be a menace to the police and a terror to those they loot, but they do have some influence over a hungry people starved for legends. If names like Mohar Singh once struck fear in the hearts of villagers, they also inspired awe and wonder and envy. All political Parties in Madhya Pradesh have tried to use the influence of these dacoits to further their chances in elections. This time, most of the "superstars", who surrendered after JP's efforts, have decided to work for the Congress(I). AJOY BOSE followed them on the campaign trail.

Pictures by KAMAL SAHNI

new gang-leaders have embarked on a new profession: politics.

Two of the most dreaded of the old dacoits were Mohar Singh and Madho Singh, who had a combined price of Rs. 4.5 lakhs on their heads before they surrendered in 1972. About a month before the Assembly elections, they were suddenly released from the "open" jail, and immediately afterwards Madho Singh issued a statement that he was joining the Congress(I). One day both Madho Singh and Mohar Singh were seen trooping into the circuit house in Bhopal to meet Union Housing Minister P. C. Sethi who was mainly instrumental in getting them released. They later went to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister. Within a week they were back in the Chambal—and began their campaign.

It was a unique campaign, because neither went anywhere except with their private guards—and guards who

were heavily armed. Guns are hardly an uncommon sight in Chambal, where the weapon is a status symbol. It is a gun-crazy valley, and the mere possession of a sophisticated firearm gives tremendous psychological advantage to a person. Moreover, the fact that dacoits like Mohar Singh and Madho Singh have officially "surrendered" does not make them either "respectable" or powerless. They still have guns and gunmen at their command, a fact which is quite visible to a transient reporter, and which is understandably even more apparent to the resident villager. (Guns are also hired out during times like these, when elections are taking place. Along with the rent, the value of the gun has to be deposited with the owner before anyone can hire a gun).

When I asked a villager in Morena district whether these ex-dacoits would make any difference to the



Subba Rao

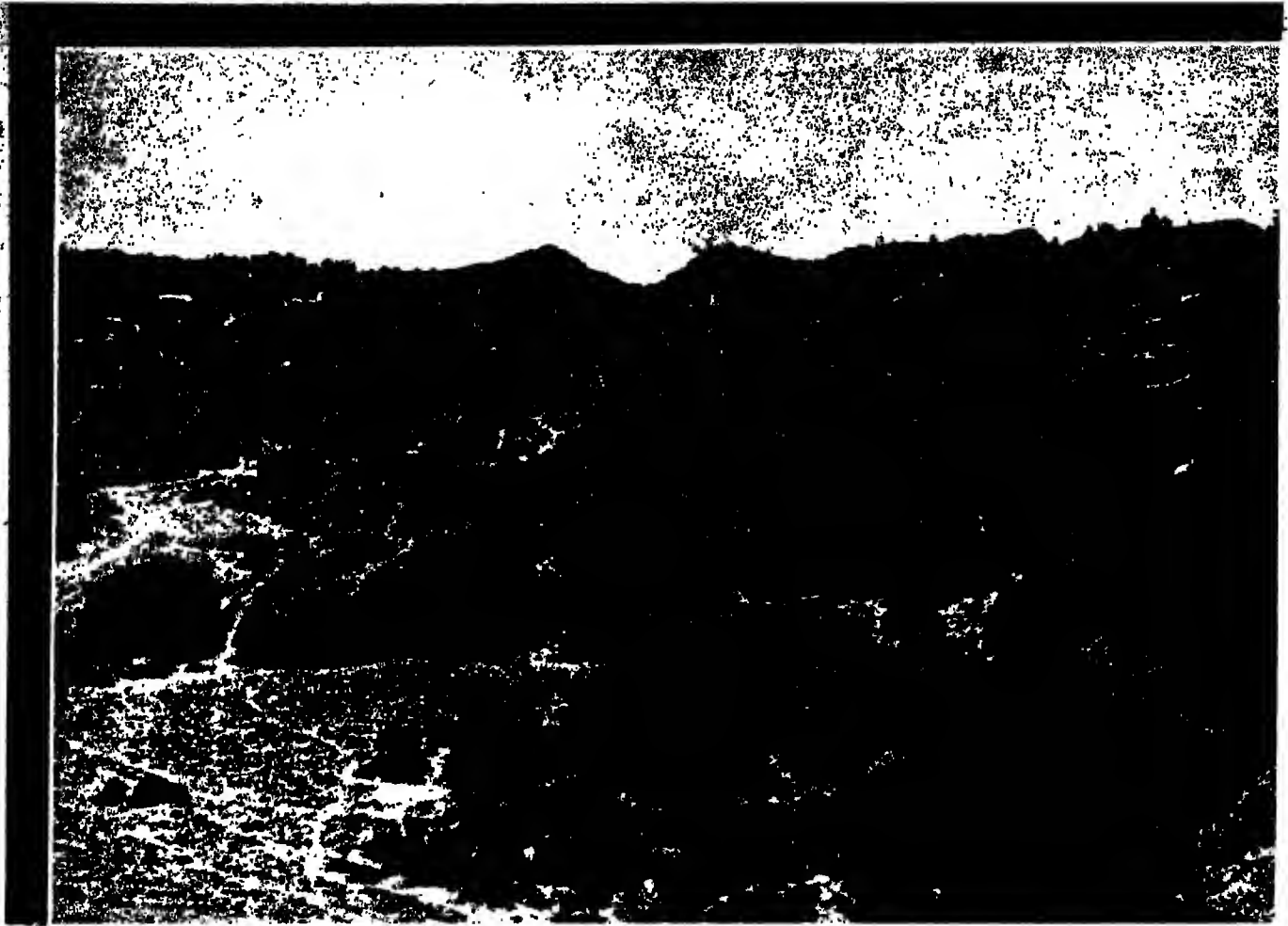
elections, his answer was, "Babuji, they by themselves can't do anything. But their guns will bring them votes". The villager himself owned a 315 semi-automatic, but the firearm he really coveted was the automatic rifle, which is found only among the big dacoit gang-leaders.

But even apart from their gun-power, the dacoits (current or ex) have a certain influence over the people of the Chambal valley, an influence resulting partly from caste and partly from the local and national romanticisation of dacoity. Madho Singh is a thakur, and he arouses the respect of his caste brethren in the Morena and Bhind districts. One thakur of Morena town put it like this: "Ever since Madho Singh became a dacoit, we thakurs have been proud of him. He is a legend among us. Every thakur boy dreams of growing up to be a Madho Singh". Similarly, Mohar Singh, a gujjar, has influence among the gujjars of the Chambal.

Gata is a remote village in the Mehengaon tehsil of the valley. When we reached there, Mohar Singh was sitting majestically on a cot (see pictures) and holding forth to a group of people, mostly gujjars, whom they should vote for. Popularly known by a nickname which owes its origins to his flourishing moustache, Mohar Singh was the centre of attraction. Children stared awestruck at the giant; each time he cracked a joke everyone roared. Mohar Singh, who is illiterate, was not particularly adept at defining the finer points of politics; it was obvious that his campaign was based more on his presence than his eloquence. He sat for some time on a dais which had been erected for the ex-maharaja, Madhavrao Scindia, who was also scheduled to



◀ Mohar Singh and his followers



The Chambal ravines

come on behalf of the Congress (I) and persuade the people to vote for his Party in a rather more conventional manner. But Scindia failed to turn up, and Mohar Singh, eventually bored with playing with the Congress flag on the dais, got up to leave. When the candidate from the area asked him to stay on, Mohar Singh gave him a huge grin, slapped him on the back, and told him not to worry. "You will win," Mohar Singh predicted confidently.

But not everywhere did Mohar Singh get an equally welcome reception. For obvious reasons. A dacoit does not leave only legends behind him; he also leaves a history of dacoity and murder (Mohar Singh is alleged to have killed more than 340 people!). If he is a bit of a hero in Gata village, Mohar Singh is generally considered an arch villain in Bhind town. People dismiss him here as a useless, drunken has-been, who could only damage the Congress (I)'s chances, not improve them. Many villagers have had their relatives murdered by either Mohar Singh or his gang, and in this area, memories are long, passions are deep, and the ruling law is an eye for an eye. The ex-dacoits do not go anywhere where they know they have enemies: one of their compatriots was recently shot dead by a man who had been waiting for years to take revenge.

MADHO Singh and Mohar Singh are only two of the more illustrious dacoits who have plunged into the election campaign. Of the total of 685 dacoits who had surrendered in different batches in 1961, 1972 and 1976, all but a few have been released. Many of these released dacoits, particularly the gang leaders, have now turned to the lucrative business of providing muscle power for the political Parties in the elections.

It must, in real terms, be considered to the credit of the Congress (I) that it has bagged the support of all the major former dacoits. But a host of smaller dacoits have lined up on the side of other political Parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party and Lok Dal. While all political leaders vehemently deny that they are taking the help of dacoits, it is a fact that not only are old dacoits helping political Parties, but even dacoits who are presently active in the Chambal valley and the border states of UP and Rajasthan are supporting some Party or the other in the election campaign.

Due to a strange apathy on the part of the State Government and the romanticization of dacoits in the Chambal, the last few years have seen a steady growth of dacoit gangs in the area. The biggest of these gangs

is led by Malkhan Singh who comes from Bhind district but operates mainly in UP and Rajasthan. Malkhan became a dacoit in 1973 after he shot a man because of some dispute over land. Taking advantage of the inactivity of the Government and police after the 1972 surrender, Malkhan has built up over the years a gang of over 50 men who carry sophisticated weapons, including light machine guns. By the time the police woke up to his activities, Malkhan had become very powerful and repeated attempts by the police to apprehend him have failed. The few members of Malkhan's gang who have died have actually been shot by rival dacoit gangs. Malkhan is known to be a fierce and egocentric man. Recently, he is said to have shot down three dacoits after they had kidnapped a boy called Malkhan. Such acts have made the name of Malkhan Singh, a legend in the Chambal valley which thrives on such legends.

Other dacoit gang leaders in the area are Chotte and Balban who are giving selective support to Bharatiya Janata Party candidates. For instance, Rasool Singh, now a BJP candidate, won the 1977 Assembly elections partly due to the support given to him by Chotte and Balban. This time too, he is getting their support. But whereas last time there was nobody to challenge his gunmen, this time the Lok Dal candidate in this consti-

agency. Rama Shanker Singh, is being helped by some old dacoits. While Rasool Singh has more guns, the old dacoits on the side of Rama Shanker are confident that in a gun battle they will win. "These new dacoits don't know a thing about gun battles. We have survived many an encounter with the police. Two of us are equal to 20 of them," said two old dacoits who are supporting Rama Shanker.

An interesting dacoit who has lately become big in the Chambal valley is Pan Singh Tomar, a former shot put champion of India who once represented the country in the Asian Games. Pan Singh retired from the Army in 1977 and came to live in his village in Morena. He fell out with some persons in his village and after one of them allegedly molested his daughter, Pan Singh shot him down and fled to the Chambal ravines. A giant of a man, measuring nearly seven feet, Pan Singh operates in the Chambal valley in cooperation with his brother, Matadin Singh who leads another dacoit gang.

Although there is a proliferation of new dacoit gangs in the Chambal valley, there is a difference between their functioning and that of the old gangs. While previously dacoit gangs were more fond of looting villages, the new gangs get most of their money from kidnappings. For instance, in Morena district, dacoities in the first four months of this year came down to two from last year's four. But kidnappings in the same period rose from none last year to seven this year. Murders in Morena district have also risen from 14 last year to 17 this year for the same period. The victims of kidnapping are usually sons of rich farmers who are taken at gunpoint when they go to relieve themselves at night. Sometimes smaller gangs kidnap persons and then sell them to bigger gangs who collect the ransom. More people choose to pay up and in nearly all the cases the kidnapped victims are returned unhurt.

THERE is a variety of reasons behind the resurgence of dacoits. Firstly, the surrender of 1972, although initiated with the best intentions of Jayaprakash Narayan and Gandhian workers like Subba Rao, became a farce. Instead of a genuine change of heart, most of the dacoits who surrendered began to consider themselves celebrities because of the glamour and publicity given to them. A host of thrillers and films painting a very romantic idea of dacoits, further contributed to the myths surrounding them. As one dacoit who had surrendered, Gyan Singh, told me, "the surrender made it seem to people that a dacoit was an important person who was respected by even the Government".

Dacoits like Madho Singh and Mohar Singh led lives of ease at Mungaoli open jail, where they spent most of their time not repenting their old sins but enjoying, good food, good liquor and sex.

Mohar Singh, for instance, got drunk regularly and used to pick up

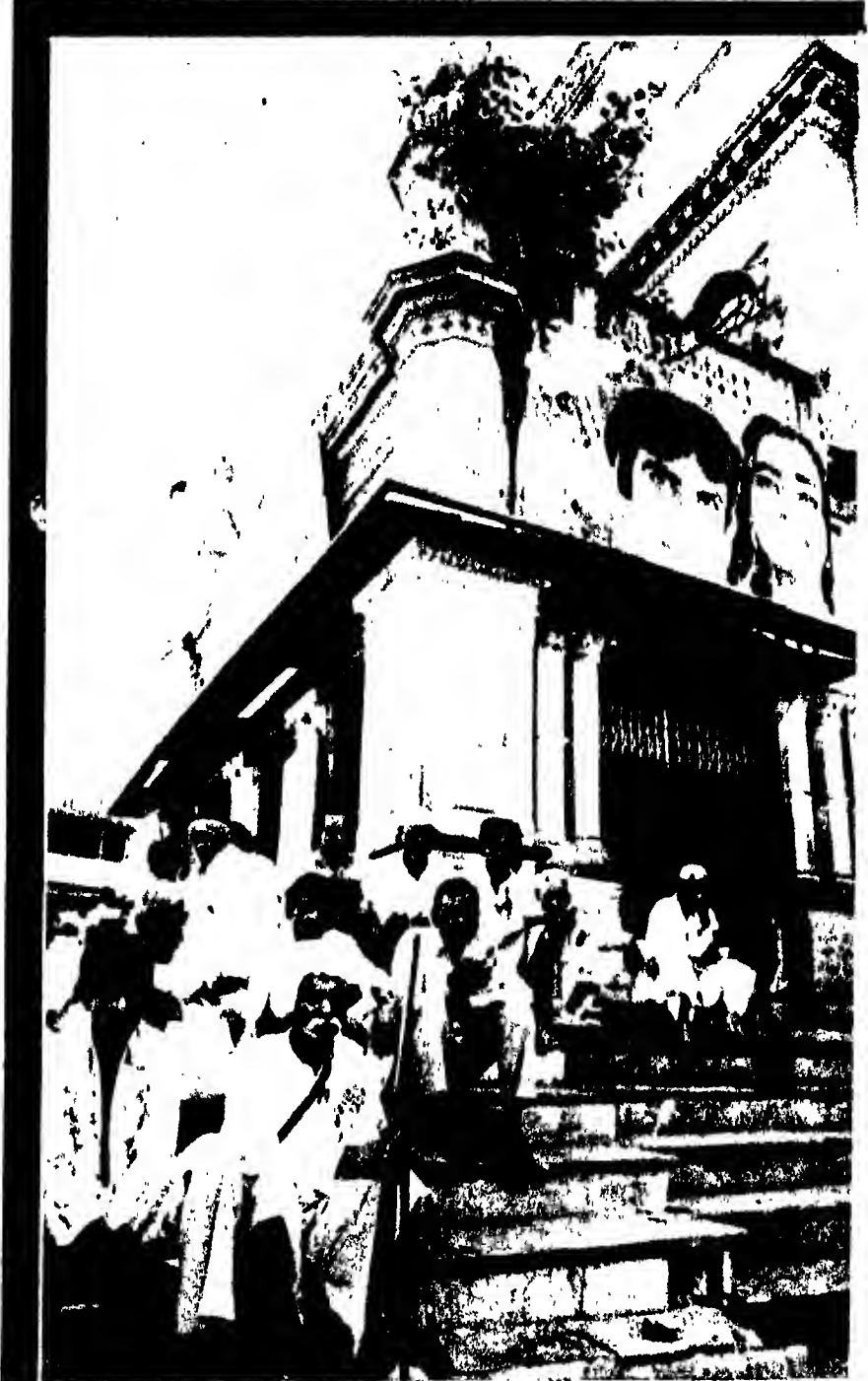
lights (in which he was often beaten up). The authorities looked the other way. The Gandhian workers, including Subba Rao, also failed to bring about any genuine change of heart among most of the dacoits. On the other hand, the dacoits, or at least a few illustrious ones, got steady publicity in the media. Even a film was made by a Bombay producer starring Madho Singh and Mohar Singh. The film, which is scheduled to be released shortly, was held up for a time when Madho Singh and Mohar Singh started quarrelling about whose name would be billed first.

Among the ordinary people of Chambal valley, the publicity and the life of ease granted to some of these

ex-dacoits provoked two reactions. Those who had personally suffered considered the authorities shockingly callous. Instead of rehabilitating the victims of the dacoits, it was the dacoits who were being pampered. To other people, the surrender seemed to be an easy escape valve after a career in crime.

Secondly, while the surrender brought a temporary lull in dacoities in the Chambal valley, it failed to remove the single biggest reason for the proliferation of dacoit gangs — the incredible number of firearms in the region. In the districts of Bhind and Morena alone, a population of 10 lakh has more than two lakh guns. A gun per family. There are

Scene outside a cinema house in Gwalior



Mohar Singh: "I will contest Charan Singh in the next elections"



MOHAR SINGH was one of the biggest dacoits who terrorised the Chambal Valley for over a decade. He once carried a reward of Rs 2.5 lakhs on his head. Mohar Singh is said to have killed over 340 people in his reign of terror before he surrendered in 1972. Now almost nine years later he is supposed to have undergone a change of heart. Mohar Singh spends most of his time drinking and making merry, particularly after his release in April this year. His easy passage from being the most wanted criminal in the country to respectability and glamour, has inspired political ambitions in him. **AJOY BOSE** met the former dacoit at a village. Surrounded by gunmen, he was busy campaigning for the Congress (I).

Q : I believe you are campaigning for the Indira Congress Party?

A : Of course, I have always been with the Congress. They took my support before, secretly. Now that I am a free man, I can give my support openly. What is wrong with that? I am after all a man of influence.

Q : How about Madho Singh?

A : Madho Singh is also with me. We both are for Mrs Gandhi. We went to Delhi and met her and Sanjay Gandhi. We told them that we would support them.

Q : What did Mrs Gandhi say?

A : Nothing much. She just smiled.

Q : And Sanjay?

A : We were there for a short while.

Q : Didn't you try to get election tickets for yourselves?

A : Madho Singh would have got an election ticket but it was too late. It's a pity. He should have stood from Ron constituency. There these small dacoits are fighting among

themselves. We would have shown them what a real dacoit is.

Q : How about yourself?

A : I have decided to stand against Chaudhury Charan Singh in Baghpat in the next elections. In the last elections, this Charan Singh had beaten up a lot of Gujjars in Baghpat. I am a Gujjar and I will take revenge. I am no less than Charan Singh and I have more muscle.

Q : But which Party will give you a ticket against Charan Singh?

A : Why? The Congress(I). They will give me a ticket. I won't join any other political Party but the Congress. I belong to the Congress.

Q : Why do you keep all these gunmen with you?

A (Starts laughing) Arre, I have to protect myself. Do you think I lack enemies? They will shoot me down like a dog if I don't protect myself.

Q : Who are these "they"?

A : All the people who think I have killed or injured their relatives. They are still lying in wait for me. I can't relax. There are some areas I can't even enter. Otherwise I will suffer the same fate as Ram Singh.

Q : Who is Ram Singh?

A : Ram Singh was one of the dacoits in my gang. He was released with me a few weeks back. He was a fine fellow. But he got careless. One day he went back to his old village and he was shot down. It's a pity.

Q : Who shot him down?

A : Well, there is an old vendetta. Ram Singh became a dacoit after he killed the man who (had) killed his father. Now this man's son had been waiting for Ram Singh to be released. He was the man who shot Ram Singh down.

Q : How long ago did Ram Singh kill this man's father?

A : Over ten years back.

Q : And the son still remembered?

A : This is the way of the Chambal. Even if you want to forget, the villagers won't let you forget. The son has to take revenge for his father and the brother has to take revenge for his brother. This is the law of the Chambal.

Q : Now Ram Singh's son will take revenge?

A : That is the trouble. Ram Singh has no family to take his revenge. It's a real pity.

Q : Do you think that after the surrender, dacoits can return in a big way to the Chambal?

A : Of course, they can. Nothing has changed. People still carry guns, they still get angry and they still shoot each other. How can you stop dacoits if everything is the same?

Q : What is the difference between the present gang of dacoits and your gang of dacoits?

A : The only difference is of size. I had far more people under me. We were better equipped. These are small gangs.

Q : Do you think they can grow as big as your gang?

A : Why not? They have got courage. They have got guns. They can grow into big gangs.

Q : Don't you think that you should try and reform them?

A : Nobody is interested. Why should I bother? I have better things to do than chase dacoits.

Q : How about you? Do you think you can take to the Chambal ravines again?

A : No, no. (Patting his paunch) I have grown too fat. It's a tough life out there. You have to walk too much.

Q : So, now you plan to do politics?

A : Yes, I think I will become a politician. There is a good future in politics.

over 46,000 licensed guns in Morena alone, and it is a well-known fact that the number of unlicensed guns is far more than licensed ones.

The craze for guns is limitless. According to Morena district collector, Mr Vardhan, he gets an average of 25 applications a day for gun licences. The authorities claim that they try their best to check out the antecedents of persons before giving them licences. But since the demand for firearms is so great it is extremely difficult to exercise restraint. For instance, a large number of persons who come for gun licences in Morena district, according to Mr Vardhan, are women who say that they need guns for their own protection. The women are deliberately sent by their menfolk to dupe the authorities into giving them gun licences.

The importance of firearms is also evident from the way a dacoit gang

shares its loot. The ratio is this: A member who has a 12-bore gun gets one part, one who has a .315 semi-automatic rifle gets two parts and one who has an automatic weapon or a light machine gun gets three parts. The gang leader invariably makes a neat profit since he has the maximum number of guns. A good way of making money from fellow dacoits who have no guns is to hire guns out to them in return for half the share the gun brings.

Gun running is one of the most lucrative businesses in the Chambal valley and the usual sources for gun-runners are either the police or Army armouries. Since there is a large recruitment from the region to the police and Army, contacts in the forces are not difficult to make. These guns are bought not only by dacoits but by ordinary people who carry them around everywhere like ornaments. At marriage parties, for

instance, it is very usual for the men present on the occasion to let off salvo after salvo to celebrate the wedding. A favourite story told in the valley is about the bridegroom who came from Bhopal to marry a girl of the valley but fled when the bridal party welcomed him with a gun salute, thinking they were dacoits.

The omnipresence of the gun has its inevitable effects. A small land dispute or quarrel which could lead, at the most, to fisticuffs in any other part of the country results in the Chambal valley in a shootout. The hot weather and the general naivete of the people in the region are but catalysts in the trigger-happy atmosphere. Once a man kills or injures another, he can do two things. One is to wait quietly for the police to come and arrest him. The other and more popular act is to take his own gun and flee to the ravines and join a

"Dacoits taking to politics is disastrous"

If Jayaprakash Narayan was the moving spirit behind the surrender of the dacoits of Chambal, SUBBA RAO was the man who actually worked out the details of the surrender. More than anyone else, he kept in touch with the dacoits even after the surrender and tried to see that they had a change of heart. Today he is a bitter and disillusioned man. When AJOY BOSE met him at the Gandhi Seva Ashram in Jaura where the dacoits had surrendered in 1972, Subba Rao admitted that the dream of Jayaprakash lay in a shambles today.

Q: Don't you think that the surrender of the Chambal dacoits has turned sour today?

A: Well, I would hate to put it that way. But it is true that a lot of things we had expected to happen have not happened. Some of the dacoits have indeed reformed but I guess most of them are still criminals at heart.

Q: Where do you think you went wrong?

A: I think basically the problem was that people over-sensationalised the surrender. It is true that the surrender was a remarkable achievement. But the really difficult task was to make the dacoits actually undergo a change of heart. Nobody was really interested in follow up. The dacoits were allowed to drink and womanise and do all sorts of things in Mungaoli jail. There was just no sense of discipline or effort to really rehabilitate them. I guess I also must admit my responsibility in this failure.

Q: What was the problem?

A: Well the site chosen for Mungaoli jail turned out to be the



Subba Rao

dwelling place of criminal tribes. Having been deprived of their earlier profession of robbing and thieving, their major occupation became illicit distillation of country liquor. Who could be better victims of the trade than the inmates of the open prison? And liquor of course invariably brings all other vices along with it. True the dacoits had taken a vow of living a chaste life after surrender. But away from their families, and having almost nothing to do the whole day and with no guidance, most of them gave in to temptation. In fact, I don't blame the dacoits so much. I rather worship the few of them who in spite of all temptations kept themselves above such vicious desires and lived a pure life.

Q: How about your Gandhi Peace Foundation workers. Did

they not try to reform the dacoits?

A: A couple of workers of the Gandhi Nidhi did stay a good part of the time with the dacoits. However, to achieve positive results, we should have reinforced our strength there and some of our best and most experienced workers should have devoted their time reorienting the one-time ferocious bandits into peaceful citizens who would dedicate themselves to the service of society. Alas, again nothing like this happened. A great experiment in non-violence became a shambles.

Q: How about the resurgence of dacoit gangs in the Chambal valley?

A: Well, nobody cares, you see. I have tried to keep in touch with some of them but I am not legally allowed to contract them unless the government desires me to do so. And so far the government seems to be not at all interested. A few dacoits who have approached me to surrender have all been turned away by the police on the plea that they are too small to be taken seriously. Is this any logic?

Q: Madho Singh, Mohar Singh and some other dacoits have shown political ambitions and are campaigning openly in the state Assembly elections. What do you think of this?

A: Absolutely disastrous. It's the worst thing they can do. They were supposed to reform themselves into dedicated social workers, not politicians. This is the trouble. Politicians in the region have a vested interest in dacoits.

Q: Finally, do you think a dacoit can ever reform?

A: Well, there are some like Tehsildar Singh, son of Man Singh, who have actually reformed. But most are yet to do so. But however bitter my experiences might have been I have still not lost hope. One must hope in human beings. Otherwise everything becomes meaningless, doesn't it?

"Super dress,
baby.
Is it New Great
material?"

"No, it's
Zimals. Now
don't hold me so close,
somebody's
watching
from behind!"

new
great
mills

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dacoit gang. Nearly all dacoits have started off in this way.

Officials make a strange distinction between 'small' and 'big' dacoits. It is only when a dacoit leads a gang of more than 30, that he becomes "big" and is listed. The police are ready to take only these big dacoits seriously, and generally ignore the smaller ones. An example of the consequences of this attitude is the case of Laik Singh. This dacoit approached Subba Rao a few years ago saying that he was keen to

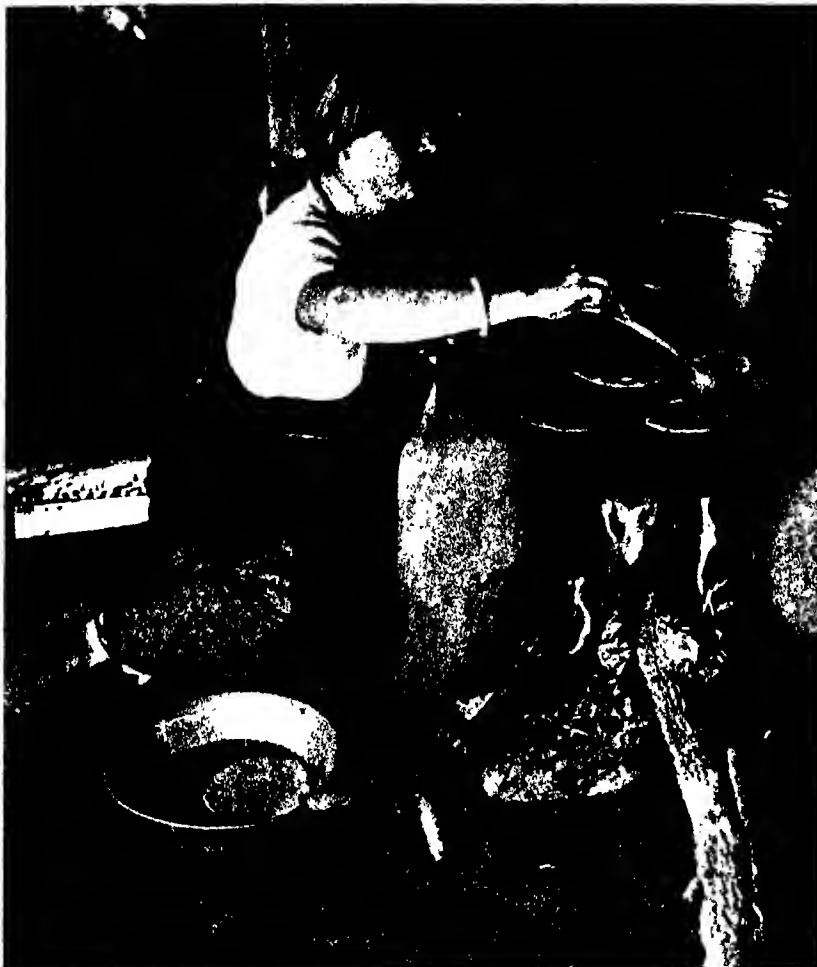
surrender. When Subba Rao approached the police they turned him down saying that Laik Singh was not a big enough dacoit to "surrender". Now Laik Singh is one of the biggest dacoits in the area.

Even stranger is the case of two brothers, Ganpat who murdered one person and fled to the Chambal ravines. Unlike others, the two brothers did not become dacoits but instead sent a message to the police that they wanted to surrender. The police, however, dismissed their sur-

render plea saying that they had not murdered enough people to be considered dacoits, so how could they surrender?

While it is true that the dacoit menace in Chambal today is nowhere near what it was a decade back, there are growing signs that it could soon assume alarming proportions. But when dacoits, of whatever current status, begin playing such an important role in elections, it is difficult to believe that they will be hunted down ruthlessly.

"The dacoits are rather cute"



Jenny Davidson

FOR nineteen-year-old Jenny Davidson, it's been a long way from Oxford University to the Chambal ravines of Madhya Pradesh. But when I met her at the Gandhi Seva Ashram in Jaura, right in the heart of the Chambal valley, the young British student seemed strangely comfortable in her alien surroundings. "Frankly, I feel safer in the Chambal ravines than on the streets of London," said Jenny with a twinkle in her eye.

A student of social anthropology at the Oxford Polytechnic in Bri-

tain, Jenny is here as a junior volunteer of the World Community Services, an organisation based in London which offers voluntary services in India and different parts of South Asia. As luck would have it, Jenny was chosen to work under Mr Subba Rao, head of the Gandhi Seva Ashram and the man who organised the surrender of the Chambal dacoits. "When I heard that I would be among the dacoits, I felt excited as well as scared," said Jenny. "But when I met them, I somehow felt confident that they won't harm me," she said.

Among the ex-dacoits she has met during her two month stay in the Chambal valley are Mohar Singh, Madho Singh and, the seven feet giant, Roop Singh, who were once the terrors of Chambal. She also met some dacoits who have not yet surrendered when she accompanied Mr Subba Rao to their hideout on a mission to make them surrender. What did the dacoits say when they saw her? "Well, I think they were a bit surprised to see me. They just smiled and folded their hands in a namaste," Jenny said.

Were the dacoits as scary as she had imagined? "No, not really; I thought they were rather cute," said Jenny. She even exchanged a few words with the dacoits in broken Hindi. "We talked about the weather. Very British, you know," Jenny broke into a burst of giggles.

The weather has been troubling Jenny more than the dacoits. A steady 46 degree centigrade temperature and the dusty winds from the Chambal ravines are the main problems that Jenny faces. "And wearing a saree in this weather can be bloody awful you know," complains the British girl. She wears a saree because she feels that she should try to be and look as Indian as possible. "But sometimes, it gets just too hot and I put on my good old dresses. It's a great relief," says Jenny.

Has she been accepted in the Gandhi Seva Ashram? "Well, everybody is nice to me and Subba Raoji is a remarkable man. He is like a saint. But I don't know about acceptance. Somehow I get the feeling that people here think that me being a single girl coming all alone is odd. They think that I may be a loose woman", said Jenny. Food is also a part of Ashram life which Jenny finds hard to digest. Although she is normally a vegetarian, her diet of salads and nut cutlets back home was drastically different from the chapatis and sabji which she has to eat at the ashram. "Sometimes, the chapatis get a bit trying," said Jenny. She will go back to England in August this year after she has completed her six-month stay in the ashram. "I don't think I'll ever forget the Chambal. It's so much more exciting than England," Jenny said.

THE BURNING NORTH EAST

SPECIAL REPORT



Assam : Bloodshed

PRECISELY at 8 p.m. on Monday May 26, Lallan Prasad Singh, the Governor of Assam met his three Advisers, H. C. Sarin, K. Ramamurti, and G. C. Baveja, the Chief Secretary Ramesh-chandra, and about half a dozen senior civil servants in the spacious sitting room of the Governor's House perched on a hill in Dispur, Assam's capital complex. Earlier that morning he had come down to the valley from the cooler heights of Shillong. The evening had brought disturbing news of more killing, looting, arson and skirmishes. As the officers poured out the details, the Governor sat grimaced, looking at the pencil marks on the map spread before him pointing out the sites of terror and violence — Barpeta Road, Howli, Choulkhoma, Nagerbora, Mukulma in Kamrup district; Bijni, Bongaigaon, Nodimati, Lentisinga, Kokrajhar, Gossingaon, Salmara in Goalpara district; Owguri and Thelamara in Darrang district; Nowgong, Samoguri and Dhing in Nowgong district; and Dibrugarh in Lakshimpur district.

The police and the para-military BSF had to open fire at several of these places, killing three persons at Bijni and one at Lentisinga. Over 100 persons, including a Congress (I) MLA Danesh Ali, a district Congress (I) president Abdul Latif, a magistrate, the officer-in-charge of a police station and ten other policemen had been injured. With violence spreading in Lakshimpur, Darrang, Nowgong, Kamrup and Goalpara — five of the ten districts of Assam, where about two-thirds of the State's population is concentrated — troops

TOOSHAR PANDIT visited the newly bloodied spots in Assam where "minorities" are challenging the AASU and Gana Parishad, and found the seeds of a major conflagration.

Photographs by Tooshar Pandit



were put on alert in virtually the whole of the Brahmaputra valley. Curfew, till then affecting only three towns, Tinsukia, Narangi and Howli, was extended to cover six other towns and villages — Barpeta Road, Mukulmua, Bongaigaon, Bijni, Lentisinga, and Salmara.

It was not the escalating incidence of violence that disturbed the Governor and his advisers as much as the pattern it presented. They had already witnessed a lot of violence in the 'non-violent' agitation against the 'foreigners': more than 100 lives had been lost. One could almost feel that in eight months of chaos and disturbances violence had been institutionalised and even sanctified to such a degree that deaths no longer nudged the people's conscience. For instance, earlier in May, five people were speared, knifed and chopped to death, four of them Bengalis and one Bihari, in scattered incidents of communal frenzy at the industrial township of Tinsukia in Upper Assam. But no tears were shed for them. Instead, perversely, the Assam agitators called a bundh in Dibrugarh, the district headquarters, to resent what they considered "dastardly counterattacks against the movement by the communal elements".

In Assam, you are a saint or a sinner depending on which side you are. Thus, a person dying after falling from a speeding truck, or after drowning in a village pond, can hope to be remembered as a martyr if he is on the right side of the movement, while a person on the wrong side is more likely to be dismissed as good riddance even if he is a victim of assassins' knives.

The most disquieting aspect of the current wave of violence in Assam is that it carries distinct communal overtones and is localised in areas where the non-Assamese population are either predominant or are in significant concentrations. The insecure non-Assamese population, driven to the wall by the movement against the 'foreigners' have, finally, not only set about organising a co-ordinated resistance to the Assam agitation but are showing themselves capable of taking aggressive postures. To this the Assamese agitators are responding with unbridled rage. So far the confrontation was limited to isolated skirmishes, partly because the non-Assamese population remained subdued, fearing that such confrontations might endanger their lives and property particularly in those areas where they are clearly outnumbered by the Assamese. Besides, they were not sure about the government's reactions. Above all, the non-Assamese community itself is divided by mutual suspicion and mistrust, the animosities having their roots in the social and religious differences among them. The Assamese were also restrained because they too knew that largescale confrontations could plunge the state into a communal war which, in quite a few places, the Assamese were bound to lose. But the battle of attrition going on in Assam for the last eight months has apparently made the minorities desperate. And this could lead to tremendous bloodshed, for on paper both the Assamese and the non-Assamese communities are almost evenly matched.

Why are the minorities frightened?

THE 1971 census puts the percentage of the Assamese speaking population at 59.5 per cent of the total population. The Muslims, as a religious group (including both Assamese and Bengalis) constitute 24 per cent of the population. Most of them have come from what is now Bangladesh, and this migration has been taking place for at least 100 years. Although Bengali-speaking, fear had prompted them to record their mother tongue as Assamese during the 1971 head-count. So, the real strength of the Assamese-speaking population as a linguistic group is likely to be less than 50, and perhaps as low as 47 per cent of the population. The tribals, who account for about 10 per cent of the state's population, have shown no inclination to support the current agitation.

Cold statistics however, cannot be an adequate measure of the divisions in the society: so many other factors influence the tensions. However, in absence of any other reliable instruments, statistics is a good indicator. The population statistics of Assam, which actually spurred the



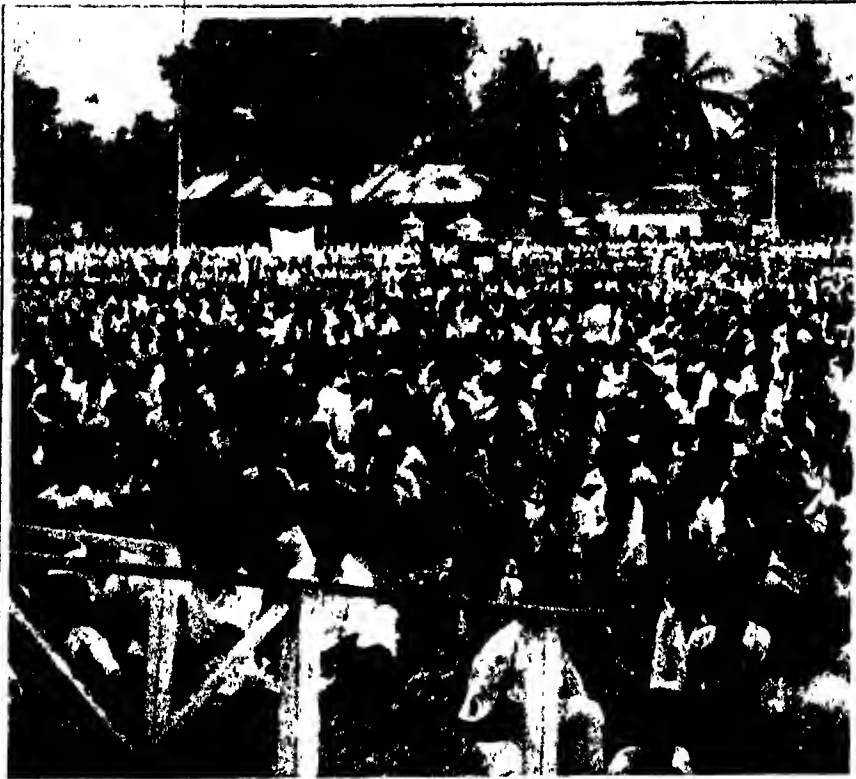
H. C. Sarin

current agitation due to the genuine fear that the majority Assamese community would turn a minority in the 1981 census, also show clearly how disastrous a communal war can be in Assam.

When the advisers and the officials said good night to the Governor at the end of the discussions on May 26, all of them were hoping that somehow the situation would settle down. Late at night the IG of Police told newsmen in Gauhati that the situation was tense at some places but was under control. But, in today's Assam, optimism has to be tentative. On the very next day the flames of communal hatred engulfed more people and more areas. Five were killed in police firing at Rupahi and Juria towns in Nowgong; one person was burnt alive at Bhaktagaon, which is also in Nowgong; two each were killed in clashes at Barpeta in Kamrup and Dnaligaon in Goalpara; five more bodies were recovered from Bijni and Lentisinga, the scenes of violent clashes in the previous night. Curfew was clamped down in seven more towns and villages in Nowgong and Goalpara districts. Arson and wholesale looting were reported from numerous places, the Goalpara, Darrang, Nowgong and Kamrup districts. In Gauhati, an official described the situation as "explosive" while announcing the ban on processions in Nowgong, Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang and Dibrugarh districts and the deployment of the troops of more areas.

Large parts of Brahmaputra valley continued to seethe with violence, arson, looting and rioting even on Wednesday May 28 without any sign of a respite. The police fired at curfew-bound Athgaon-Chapari, Lacharipur and Koknail villages in Nowgong and Rifutalla near Bongaigaon. Two more bodies were found in Bijni. A boy was killed in Salmara in Goalpara. Two other deaths were reported from Dibrugarh. A woman in a village, whose nose had been chopped off with a 'dao' following her refusal to pay subscriptions to the movement, had died; a forest ranger of Arunachal Pradesh who





Minorities meeting at Dhubri on May 26

had offered a lift in his truck to some demonstrators going north from Dibrugarh had been killed, after he was forced to get down from his vehicle midway. On May 29, ten more bodies were recovered from different places in the riot-torn districts of Nowgong, Kamrup, Goalpara and Dibrugarh.

Only in the relative calm can a real count be taken of the devastation. But even the deaths alone (35 in four days, 18 of them in police firings) are measure enough of the pure lawlessness of the Assam riots. Houses lay gutted; shops lay in

shambles, their shelves burnt bare; hundreds of people turned destitute overnight; many fled deeper into the villages; the hospitals and health centres in the riot-torn areas are now filled with wounded, wailing men, women and children; people are queueing up in front of relief camps.

The current violence clearly underlines the failure of the AASU and the GSP to convince the minorities that their agitation is secular and peaceful, and is not directed against any particular linguistic or religious group. Moreover, minori-

ties anywhere in the world are cynical. Further, however sincere the agitation leaders may be about their ends and the means, the emotive content of the movement appears to have encouraged those who want to use the agitation for either settling old scores or harrasing the minorities. This explains the influence of the RSS on the movement. There are people in Assam who think that if the minorities can be thinned out then their jobs, their land and their property will inevitably accrue to them. Even in Gauhati, it is not unusual to hear people discuss such prospects quite freely.

Obviously, this attitude has frightened the minorities, a bulk of whom are the cultivators and the agricultural labour growing most of Assam's jute and 30 per cent of Assam's food. These people, settled along the char land, had to fight against nature and circumstances to earn their present prosperity. Any hint that they may now lose all that they have earned is resented. Omar Ahmed, a farmer at Chaulkhowa in Barpeta puts it: "We have shed our blood and sweat to make the land green and we are not going to let them take it without a fight. If we have to go, we go with the land". This sentiment is only to be expected; in any agricultural society, the people's attachment to their land is very emotional.

How did AAMSU start ?

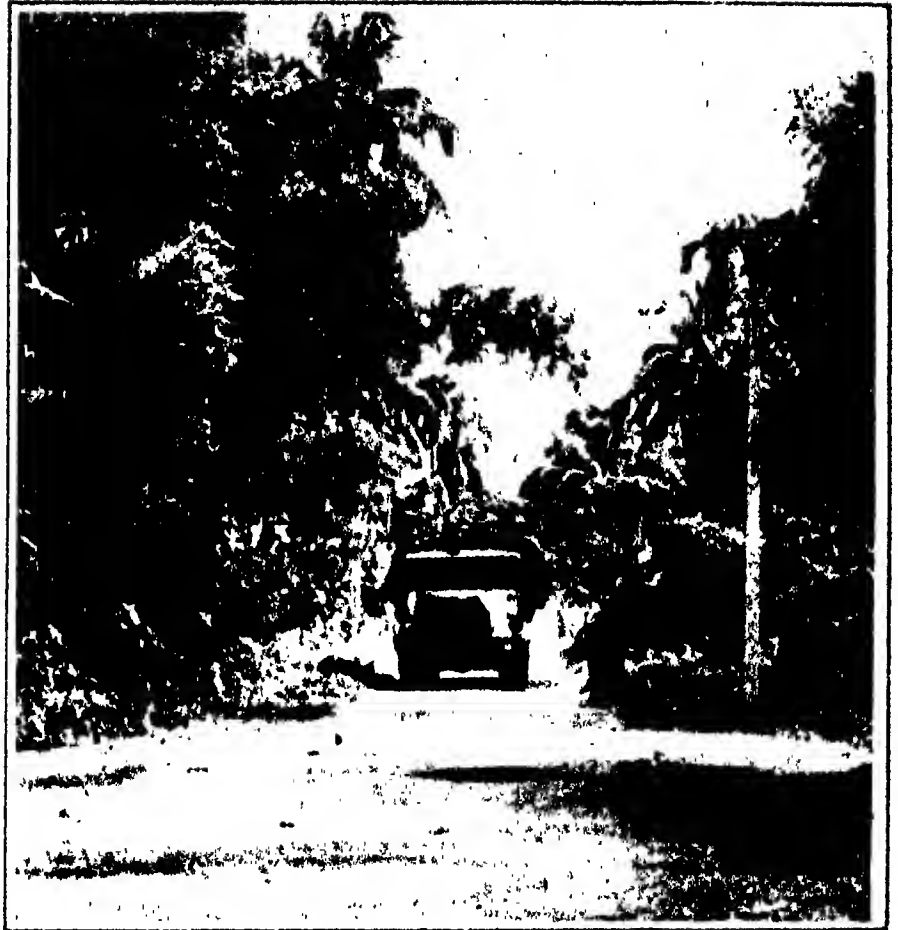
It was inevitable, therefore, that sooner or later a parallel movement would develop. It has, now. If the agitation against the 'foreigners' is an urban-centred movement, then the parallel movement depends heavily on the rural masses for support. And, if the Muslims constitute the core of the movement, it is because of their numerical superiority among the various minority groups and also because, for the first time since the communal riots in 1950, they are the main targets of attack. All these years they were not only being patronised and pampered by the politicians who saw in them a dependable vote-bank but were also being used by the Assamese in successive language riots since 1960. Mostly immigrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan, a large number had even been coerced into calling themselves Assamese-speaking both during 1961 and 1971 head counts. But, suddenly last year, they realised that all this had not been enough insurance against possible expulsion.

A Janata Party MLA Hiralal Patwari died in 1979, and a by-election for the Mangaldai constituency was announced. The ruling Janata Party Chief Minister of Assam, Golap Borbora, felt that if the Muslims did not vote for his Party, he was sure that they would not, then there was no earthly chance of his Party retaining the seat. So, a



move was initiated to delete a substantial number of Muslim voters from the voters' list. Objections were filed against more than 45,000 names in the electoral roll. A tribunal ordered deletion of some 26,000 of them, affecting mostly Muslims. Naturally Muslims started feeling insecure and uncertain. Then came the nightmare of Nalbari. Between January 3 and 7, 1980, searing violence killed 29 immigrant Muslims and rendered hundreds homeless. This was the first time since 1950 that so many Muslims had died in a riot. Obviously the insurance that they had taken was now worthless. So, as the movement against the 'foreigners' intensified, the Muslims also started organising themselves to resist.

Finally, on March 29 and 30, this took formal shape at a convention of prominent Muslim leaders and activists at Jaleswar, a small town in Goalpara district, about 180 km from Gauhati. Among those present at the convention were prominent Congress (I) leaders of the state including the then APCC(I) president Lolit Doley (now he is the secretary), general secretary Dhrubananarayan Barua, Congress (I) MLAs Santi Ranjan Dasgupta, Padam Bahadur Chauhan, Sirajul Haque, Danesh Ali Ahmed, Atzaur Rahman and Lok Dal MLA Zahirul Islam. At the convention was born the All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU) with the professed aim "to protect and to strengthen the rights of religious and linguistic minorities guaranteed by



Army setting up camp at a Barpeta village



the Constitution of India". Abdul Hai Nagork, a post-graduate commerce student of Gauhati University was named the president and Asgar Ali Ahmed, an undergraduate student at the B. H. College, the general secretary. Other members of the executive committee are: Alak Roy (vice president), Madan Mohan Pal (organising secretary) and Indra Bahadur Chettri (secretary). Almost simultaneously another sister organisation surfaced under the banner, All Assam Minority Yuva Parishad.

When Mrs Gandhi came to Assam on April 12 she heard a 37-member delegation of the AAMSU and AAMYP tell her how they were being harassed and persecuted. Some of the members sobbed as they narrated their experiences. "Save us from the hands of those



Immigrant farmers at work

Injured AASU volunteers



fanatics", they cried. Two days later, the central office of the AAMSU was inaugurated in Howli, a small town in the Barpeta subdivision about 130 kilometers north-west of Gauhati in presence of a number of Congress (I) MLAs. The choice of Howli as the headquarters for the parallel movement is as significant as the choice of Jaleswar as the venue for the convention where it was conceived. In both places Muslims are predominant. The central office of the AAMSU could very well have been at Barpeta. It is not, because that is the only town in the entire subdivision where the Assamese-speaking people are present in any significant number. Howli is just about 15 kilometers south of Barpeta, the subdivisional headquarters, and within easy reach of Tarabari, the town from which the secretary of the organisation, Ahmed, comes. Even in the choice of the venues one can detect the deep mistrusts and suspicions of one community about the other.

Initially, the AAMSU was moving very cautiously, and their leaders rarely talked about opposing the movement launched by the AASU and the GSP. "We are not opposed to anybody, although we will certainly assert our rights guaranteed by the constitution": that is how the AAMSU leaders used to react to any suggestion about a possible confrontation with the AASU or the GSP in the future. But their tone and tenor changed radically and acquired militancy after the AASU and the GSP announced, on April 22 their plans to screen and deport the 'foreigners' if the government did not do this by May 10. AAMSU also struck a strident note by calling upon the minority communities to raise a collective protest against the move and observe May 5 as 'protest day' through rallies and demonstrations. On May 2, the AASU and the GSP, however, revised their ultimatum, giving the government five more days to complete the task of screening, segregation and deportation of the 'foreigners'. May 15 was the new deadline. Significantly, AAMSU also deferred the 'protest day' rallies for what it claimed were "unavoidable reasons".

The ultimatum

On May 14 evening barely a few hours before the deadline set in the ultimatum was to expire, the AASU announced that it would not go ahead with its plans to deport 'foreigners' even if the government did not act within the stipulated time. But GSP maintained that the deportation should start. The same evening, the AAMSU too decided to organise marches on Monday May 26, in different parts of the state to present identical memorandums to the local officials demanding, among other things, safety and security for the minorities, and endorsing, by and large, Mrs Gandhi's prescription for settling the foreigners' issue. Expectedly, the AASU and the GSP reacted sharply to the idea. "It is going to endanger the traditional unity and communal harmony in Assam. It is an evil design and conspiracy hatched by all-India Parties (a euphemism for Congress (I)) aimed at creating communal disturbances in Assam and sowing seeds of violence in an otherwise peaceful and non-violent movement," they maintained as they set about to organise resistance to the AAMSU's 'protest day' plans for May 26. They also squarely blamed Mrs Indira Gandhi for the current spell of violence, and alleged that she had planned the strategy at a secret meeting with the leaders of the minority community at Nowgong during her Assam tour on April 12. "The aim", Jatin Mali the president of the North East Regional Students' Union, a co-ordinating body of all students' organisations agitating against the 'foreigners' in seven north-eastern states, says, "is to scuttle our legitimate movement by fanning communalism and create conditions for justifying the use of force". In private conversations the agitators talk even more stridently. "The fight is now between the palm (Mrs Gandhi's election symbol) and the fist (the emblem of the AASU flag)," they say.

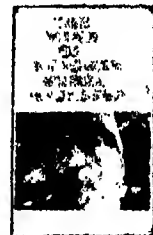
It is difficult to believe that Mrs Gandhi flew all the way to Nowgong to draw up a blueprint for violence, simply because she had no need to. If she wanted to do that, she could have had done it sitting in New Delhi by remote control through any one or all of her many agencies. And, even if the allegations of the Assam agitators are true, she was hardly likely to succeed unless the agitators themselves played into her hands. In a way, they did. It was only after the leaders of 'foreigner' hatao agitation decided to resist the "protest day" processions and rallies that the Assamese and the non-Assamese communities came directly on a collision course. Left alone, the rallies would have at best highlighted the existence of an emotional gap between the Assamese and the non-Assamese communities, a fact which hardly requires

any reiteration. Certainly, the clashes and the violence that followed could have been avoided.

But then, the agitation leaders were under some kind of compulsion to put up a show of strength. They perhaps thought, and not without justification, that the memorandums presented by the minorities were likely to be shown by Mrs Gandhi at her meeting with the national leaders in New Delhi on May 31, as a counter-weight to the demands raised for the deportation of the 'foreigners'. And, if the minorities turned out in impressive numbers even the national Parties sympathetic to the agitation against the 'foreigners' would have to pause and ponder. After all, millions cannot be dismissed just like that. Another justification offered by the Assam agitators for opposing the rallies was that the foreigners could not claim the right to demonstrate. When this thesis was presented by a group of agitation leaders to the advisers to the Governor at Dispur it was promptly rejected. "Now, you don't mean all the members of the linguistic minority are foreigners?" one of the advisers asked. Yes, they did mean that. "Those who are genuinely Indians are all with us in our agitation and it is the foreigners who have planned the march to lend legitimacy to their illegal stay," one of the deputationists argued. The advisers, however, did not agree and asserted that the minorities had as much right to demonstrate as anybody else. "If you can agitate for eight months, hold rallies and demonstrations, break the curfew, abstain from duties, why can't they bring out processions to submit memorandums?" one of the advisers asked.

The protest rallies that followed clearly demonstrated the intensity of the minorities' anger and frustrations. The Bengali Hindus are yet to identify with the AAMSU in any significant manner, although in quite a few places some Bengali Hindus could be spotted in the 'protest day' processions. But even without the active participation of the Bengali Hindus AAMSU organised impressive turnouts. In nine rallies in the Barpeta sub-division alone, the official estimate was that in all at least 300,000 people had turned up. This is about 10 per cent of the entire population of the district. Obviously, to a man, every Muslim of the area had participated in the processions (women were significantly absent). This emphasises two things. One, the emotional content of the parallel movement is as strong as that of the agitation against the 'foreigners'. Two, the minorities too have opted for a strategy that calls for offence as the best means of defence. And here lies the greatest difficulty in disengaging the rival camps. The crisis is too real, too close, to be ignored any more. Assam is certainly sitting on a powder keg with irresponsible people playing with fire, hardly realising that even a small spark can rip apart everything to pieces.

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Case of the missing cigarettes

Smokers are going crazy

ON May 22, irate smokers, fed up of paying exorbitant prices for cigarettes, and fed up of buying whatever was on sale (most favourite brands were missing) set fire to a cigarette shop in Calcutta. Since early April the whole country has been plunged in an unprecedented cigarette shortage that is driving all addicts of the 'cancer stick' crazy. Smokers have by now reconciled themselves to the annual pre-budget vanishing trick that cigarettes do every year, which lasts about a fortnight. But this year is different. The shortage is infinitely more severe, and the budget is not the sole culprit.

The seeds of the present shortage were sown on March 18 when the ITC factory in Bangalore, their largest and accounting for 30 per cent of their total output, went on strike. The company's filter-tipped and king size cigarettes are all produced there. Its monthly output is a massive 1,000 million sticks. ITC has now set up a king size cigarette making machine in one of its five other factories but that obviously cannot meet the whole demand.

The chief public relations officer of ITC, Mrs A. Shyam, said in Calcutta that the shortage was due mainly to the prolonged strike at the Bangalore factory. "We are not in any way responsible for the price hike. The moment we hand over the bulk to the wholesaler our job is over. We have no control over anyone, neither the wholesaler nor the retailer." Are the wholesalers manipulating the price? Mrs Shyam replied, "No, I don't think so. We have been dealing with them for a long time. They could never charge arbitrary prices with a profit motive. Moreover, aren't they scared of being raided by the police?" She agreed however that there could be a few black sheep among them who were selling cigarettes at a premium. "It is the retailers," she confidently asserted, "who are hoarding the cigarettes and then selling them at a higher price. There are 10,000 retailers in Calcutta besides the unauthorised ones. Can you imagine the quantity that could be stashed away by them?"

The vendors, though, do not seem to be in a position to stock much. They get their supplies from the dealers against cash and most of them are too poor to be able to lock up enough capital in the hoarding. Also



it is the dealer who dictates the price to the vendor and not the other way around. "I am positive that the dealers are the main profiteering force right now. It is certainly not a pre-budget reaction, for the profit level is much higher than the pre-budget profit," said a retailer in the Gariahat area of Calcutta.

The Hindustan Tobacco Company, the highest wholesaler of ITC cigarettes in Calcutta, said that the Bangalore strike was the sole cause of the shortage. "It is the simple law of demand and supply that is operating. We are not in a position to meet one-fourth of the demand." While they claimed that they themselves had absolutely nothing to do with the price rise, they admitted that there were a few exceptions, "for example, the middle men at Raja Katra in the Burrabazar area." Ved Prakash of Om Prakash and Co, Delhi, dealing largely in ITC cigarettes echoed the same sentiments. "We don't make extra money because of this crisis. We are getting the cigarettes at the proper price from the manufacturers and selling them to the wholesalers at the right price. We even supply the retailers at the correct price."

A company which is benefiting from this is the competitor, National Tobacco Co. Its production has shot up by 15 per cent recently. But as ITC has a 50 per cent share of the total market even four NTCs cannot step in to fill the shortage, confessed the NTC sales manager, N. C. Chakravarty. "To be candid, the present situation is not conducive to growth. True, smokers are switching over to our brands. But we will really be tested when the ITC brands reappear. Then there is this power crisis in West Bengal. Even if we want to we cannot expand. The power situation has crippled us."

The West Bengal Government has asked the police to probe the whole business and book the profiteers if necessary. But there seems to be some confusion over the powers the police have in the matter as cigarettes are not an essential commodity and

the Essential Commodities Act cannot be utilised. ITC is planning to start some retail outlets of its own. But when? After the strike is over?

An insider in the cigarette industry explained how the money was being made and at which stages. "The manufacturer supplies the dealer at the correct rates. Now this supply is of course, below the normal level. So some of the dealers, not all, sell to the wholesalers at a higher rate than normal. The wholesaler does the same to the retailer and the retailer, after keeping a higher margin, sells to the customer. But there is also an economic compulsion in this other than exploiting the situation. At every level the volume of turnover has gone down because of the shortage and so even to retain the previous levels of earnings everybody will have to make more profit per packet!"

The strike which was launched by the Mumbai Bidi Tambakhu Vyapari Sangh on April 4 for a 15 per cent hike in commissions, has added new dimension to the cigarette crisis in Bombay city. The strike enjoyed considerable support initially but later the movement lost its momentum and is on the verge of petering out. But for the smoker, there is no relief. The prices of favourite brands have skyrocketed as vendors and small distributors get rid of old stocks. Some spurious stuff is also being peddled, adding to the customers' plight. In the face of vendors bent upon making a fast buck during the "strike", the Vyapari Sangh declared on May 8 that they would henceforth only boycott Golden Tobacco products. A bit of politics has also entered the cigarette crisis in Bombay. A parallel cigarette vendors' union has been started by Gulab Joshi of the Congress (I). However, the smokers will continue to suffer until the government seriously decides to intervene and bring the confrontation between vendors and manufacturers to an end.

The worst affected among Madras smokers are the Scissors addicts. Scissors is the single largest selling brand in the city and is especially popular among the working class Charminar of Vazir Sultan, which is priced at least two paise less, comes a close second in Madras. The only place where one can get ITC cigarettes at the correct price in the city is at the hotel Chola cigarette shop; Chillum. Here too the costly brands like India Kings are unavailable because of the total stoppage of production.

This story has been written on the basis of reports filed by MALABIKA BHATTACHARYA in Calcutta, SAUMITRA BANERJEE from Delhi, ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA from Bombay and ASHOK KAMATH from Madras.

LIVING



Ramani Bhatia

Caught and bowled over

He scored runs, he claimed wickets, he held catches. And Kapil Dev's most impressive catch this season turned out to be his engagement with Ramani Bhatia on May 7. The couple first met in Bombay where the cricketer was attending a coaching camp two years ago when Ramani was in her teens.

For one thing, the engagement scotched all rumours about the cricketer's alleged affair with film actress Sarika, and all manner of spe-

culatation was ipso facto put to rest. The tongues had started wagging when the actress visited Chandigarh about a year ago and had dinner with Kapil's parents. But Kapil was in England, or so he claims. Subsequently he met her two or three times, once when she came to Chandigarh for a shooting stint.

The most disappointed people must be the nation's gossip columnists. They will have little or nothing to speculate on now.

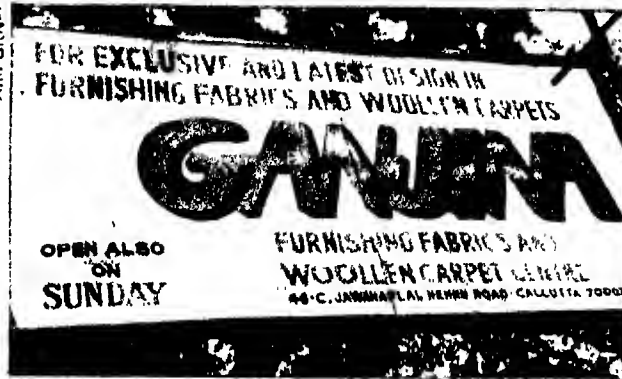


Kapil Dev

That's not us

See anything familiar in the lettering of this advertisement? In case you don't, take another look and focus on the word SUNDAY. No prizes for guessing where that was copied from. This is a hoarding near the Alipore Zoo, Calcutta, and was spotted by Anil Grover. Pardon us for drawing it to your notice, but this was one we just couldn't resist.

Anil Grover



Heavyweight polo

Never has a cartoon mattered so much as the one which appeared in Punch 23 years ago depicting the Indian polo team, led by Sawai Man Singh, which won the world championship in 1957. The cartoonist's idea was to illustrate the total superiority of the Indian team which was shown perched on an elephant, each member of the team

wielding a long polo stick. Inspired by the cartoon, Sawai Man Singh's son, Jai Singh, created a new sport—elephant polo. When it was first played at the Rambagh Polo Ground in Jaipur in 1977, a crowd of over 50,000 spectators gathered to witness the fun. Adding an element of grandeur was a foreign TV crew. A set

of rules was formalised and the sport was soon recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records. Elephant polo is played between two teams, each of which uses four elephants. For safety's sake each elephant carries a mahout as well as a player. The referee is also perched on an elephant throughout the game. In this case the polo stick is roughly six feet long and the ball is made of rubber. The playing area is the same size as a football field and though the duration of each match is only fifteen minutes, it is fifteen minutes of outrageous entertainment. Very often, out of sheer curiosity, the elephants decide to kick the ball around the field and sometimes they even pick up the ball with their trunks and hurl it out of the playing area. These, of course, are taken as fouls.



Kamal Jha

Quiet rolls the film

On May 19 this year India's official and, according to some critics, most promising entry in recent years was screened at the Cannes film festival in France. It was Mrinal Sen's *Ekdin Pratidin* which had created quite a stir in India. Mr Sen had arranged a number of previews in the country before despatching the film to Cannes and also turned down two offers for a commercial release of the film in Calcutta. It was almost flawless planning: the film would go to Cannes with a massive build-up by the Indian press.

Strategy apart, *Ekdin Pratidin* was undoubtedly a good choice for the festival. First reports of its impact at Cannes—where it was dubbed under the title, *And Quiet Rolls The Day*—were provided by John Warrington, a noted BBC critic, who spoke to Masoodul Huq during a week-long tour of Calcutta. It had apparently lived up to its reputation but was pitted against some extraordinary European entries. Then came the news of a controversy: the Indian entry was granted only two screenings against the stipulated three. Whatever the reasons for this Mr Sen might just have found the right excuse for the failure of his film to figure among the best.

Saturday tight fever

The city groaned. Parts of it did, that is. Everybody knows that a bandh can be pretty boring, especially if one is a teetotaler, so the 24-hour Bangla bandh gave rise to quite a bit of controversy. Calcutta, for one entire day, closed its doors on Saturday, May 17 but the citizens all found their own ways to beat the boredom. Some of them stocked up on their liquor since they reckoned the only sensible way to spend the day was elbow-bending. Liquor shops remained open late on Friday night and at least one shop owner claimed that he did brisk business after sunset, when offices emptied and drinkers queued up to buy their hooch. Saturday itself was a

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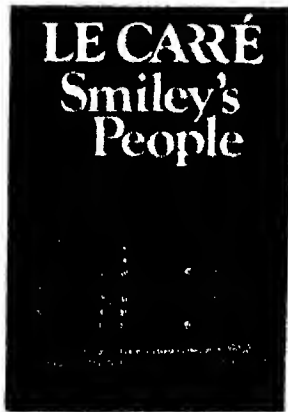
West Bengal Government poster calling for the Bandh

quiet day, very quiet. The streets were deserted; apart from the occasional police patrol van, very little else moved and the whole scene seemed re-

miniscent of what had happened on the day of the eclipse. By mid-afternoon some of the bolder ones took to the roads and a few cars and scooters made their way round empty thoroughfares. In central Calcutta, one housewife awoke from her afternoon siesta when she heard shouting in the street outside her house. Fearing trouble, she rushed to pull down the shutters only to notice that the noise was being generated by a football match being played on the road itself. One locality was pitting its talents against its neighbours and supporters of both sides were cheering themselves hoarse. The rain, may we add, did not dampen their spirits.

Book pirates Carré on regardless

It was one of those peculiar coincidences. Macmillans of India had organised a Press conference over cocktails to meet Adrian Bourne of Hodder and Stoughton, and to announce the tie-up between the two publishing giants. As Ashish Rajadhyaksha went up the steps of the Taj Hotel, he noticed the bookshop at the foyer selling paperback copies of John le Carré's latest thriller, *Smiley's People*. At Rs ten it was obviously a good buy. It only became apparent later that even as Macmillans were celebrating the tie-up, they



themselves had been scooped by intrepid pirates. The paperback edition of the book was distributed by Pan over-

seas and reprinted in India by Macmillans more than a month after the pirated version hit the stands. The Macmillans edition sold hardly anything, perhaps because it was priced at Rs fifteen, Rs five dearer than the pirated edition. The book had been reprinted in India by Macmillans to overcome the traditional 2,000 copy import ceiling per title. They must have expected to make a killing, as considerable interest was generated in the country by the sale of the earlier Hodder and Stoughton hardcover edition.

VCR: a Very Cool Racket

A martial law team in Karachi, accompanied by a magistrate, recently raided a hall where an Indian film, *Mahachor*, was being viewed by about 250 people. It was actually being viewed on VCR or video cassette recorder. Besides, the movie starred ever-green Rajesh Khanna, who is still extremely popular in Pakistan. Each of the viewers had paid Rs seven in order to see the movie. The VCR is fast becoming a problem for the authorities in Pakistan and the situation in Bangladesh is no better. Indian films are freely available on cassettes in Bangkok and Singapore — their rights already sold by producers in India — and these are safely smuggled into Pakistan and Bangladesh. They are then sold to underground distributors who arrange frequent private viewings of the films. Producers in India make a neat packet by selling the rights of their films to VCR manufacturers in the Far East who, in turn, get their share by selling the cassettes to buyers from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The latter double their investments in no time and the Indian film-crazy audiences in Pakistan and Bangladesh get the chance to see the gaudy trash which they are in love with.

Exit the king (so soon ?)



Are Amitabh Bachchan's days really numbered? The star turned up at a recent Cine-goers Club reception in Bombay and finally gave an indication of the fact that his days of glory are drawing to a close. Either that, or Amitabh has yet to get over *Kabhi Kabhie* and his pal do pal ka shair image in that film. "I will fade out one day," said the star. "Nobody can stay here forever. New faces, fresh talents will come to films."

DUBIOUS DISTINCTIONS

Headline of the fortnight: "India sure of winning hockey medal at Moscow". Big deal, since only three teams are competing.

Proposal of the fortnight: that the teams for the Calcutta Football League don boxing gloves instead of boots.

Chicago of the fortnight: Calcutta, where you can get mugged for a ten-rupee note.

Success of the fortnight: The Kapil Dev Lonely Hearts Club, formed by millions of disappointed females after the Test star became engaged.

"Art films can be commercially successful"

What will the newly formed Film Development Corporation do? Should Doordarshan be separate from AIR? ARUNA VASUDEV met Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting VASANT SATHE for a frank discussion on the controversies surrounding his views on Indian cinema and TV.

Q MR Sathe, you have recently taken a radical step which has created a furore in Indian film circles. You have amalgamated the Film Finance Corporation and the Motion Picture Export Corporation into one body to be called the Film Development Corporation. It has created a controversy straight-away because the new film makers, or the parallel cinema, if you like, seem to be fearing that they will be crushed by it. Rightly or wrongly, this feeling is growing.

A: Wrongly, I will say. I feel that the Film Development Corporation will be an organisation which can help the entire film world in every aspect. For example, I can divide the film industry or the film field into five major sectors, namely: First, the usual films, or what are known as commercial films, although I don't like to make distinctions between commercial films and art films because I believe that the art films can be successful commercially and the commercial film can be artistic. That is the basic thing. But for the sake of argument, we take it that here is such a thing as a normal commercial film. Now they also have their problems like getting raw



stock at the right price, of the right quality, and then getting the credit also. They are completely in the grip of usurious creditors who charge between 20 to 30 per cent rate of interest. This creates a vicious circle. Therefore this industry has its own problems of distribution, and exhibition, etc. Now I would envisage that the FDC would apply itself to these questions. But more important than this according to me is the second sector relating to the new film, the experimental film. We have enough talent in this country, brilliant young producers who are producing films with new themes and with new techniques, off the beaten track. Such films may not be easily successful at the box office, but they need to be encouraged. This can be done only if a corporation like the FDC takes positive steps both financially and in terms of exhibition and distribution. In fact this will be the NFDC's major role.

The third field, according to me, is the one of export. It is a specialised field. That is what I have been emphasising. In all these fields we must involve knowledgeable people, people who have experience. I have great regard for the brilliance of our bureaucracy, but we are in the age of specialisation. Everywhere you need people who know the job. Selling, buying, trading, contacting people in the outside world, is a specialised job for a man who has a stake in the field. If I nominate an IAS officer who knows he will be there for only 2-3 years, then he is not going to put his heart into the job. By the time he acquires the knowhow, he may be transferred. So we lose the talent and experience. Therefore I think we must have persons with the knowledge and interest in the task of increasing our film exports throughout the world. The fourth field is that of Film Festivals. We have incorporated our Directorate of Film Festivals with the FDC. So it will deal with the entire thing relating to this aspect of film activity. This also is a specialised field. It will be under the charge of men who know the job of

organising film festivals, participating in film festivals outside, having regional film festivals within the country and all that. This is one area. Another, the fifth, is the technological aspect of the movement, what I describe as the extension programme of exhibiting films, production of 16 mm films involving more rural people and talents, production of films in the locale itself and exhibition of them in the rural community centres and open air theatres. This entire movement is a big thing in itself, a big task, and I think the Film Development Corporation will have to undertake it. Thus I visualise for the FDC a very wide range of activity and if we get the right men who know their jobs, men who know the field, who are interested and enthused about wanting to do something about it, then I think the FDC will be a success.

Q: It sounds absolutely perfect

and I hope it will work out. But what the new film makers feel is that because they have no organisation, they have not been consulted about this. They are very afraid that as it is a fledgling movement, if vested interests get a grip on the FDC, then they are going to be neglected.

A: I can appreciate their apprehension, but I can tell you that this fear is not well founded. My own personal attitude to this, as I explained to you, is to encourage the new film makers. But at the same time, let us not go to the other extreme and think that whatever is a commercial flop must be something new. Some people seem to think that the FDC loans money, a film is made. It may be thoroughly useless as far as people wanting to see it are concerned, the FDC must write off the entire money, must buy the film and put it in cold storage, with a pat on the back for the producer.



There are only two types of films—good films and bad films. There is no such distinction as an art film and a commercial film.

This is not the right attitude. A good film can also be commercially viable and vice versa. I can give the latest example of *Shankarabharanam*, an excellent film from the point of view of art but which is a roaring success at the box office.

Q: But don't you see even a film like *Shodh* which I thought was outstanding, has no obvious commercial value as such. Yet, if it had the possibility of exhibition, then slowly it would prove a success. It won't get its money back in a week, but over a period, it will get it.

A: That is why we have decided, and most of the states in the country have accepted our proposal, that all award-winning films should be exempted from entertainment tax, which is a big relief and a big incentive. I hope we can do this for more films with social themes or a purposeful theme. Purposeful does not only mean propaganda. By purposeful I mean anything that stirs society into thinking.

Q: I am going to make a very radical suggestion to you. It is something that I have been thinking

of for some time and talked to people about. For one week after the national awards, every theatre in the country should have to compulsorily show the award-winning film. That is only way you can almost force the masses to see these films. Then you can see if you can win them.

A: There will be some problems. The number of prints for compulsory showing all over the country...just as, you know, for our documentaries, we need hundreds of prints.

Q: But you could stagger it.

A: But here, as you say, if it has to be shown in every city...

Q: In one city, for one week only.

A: But if you stagger it, you can easily imagine, they will take months to reach some cities. But the concept is right. These films should be shown. That is why, more and more I have come to feel that we must rationalise, I hate to use the word regulate, distribution and exhibition systems in this country. That is the point where at both ends it poisons the industry and creates a very vicious circle. If we can take care of a film's exhibition and distribution, I think we can help the entire film industry in producing good films.

Q: That is true. But there is another point that the film makers are worried about. The demand for collateral security by the FFC. They are very worried because they have received letters saying that the loan must be repaid instantly. For instance, Mani Kaul has got a letter saying that within 15 days, he has to pay Rs 3.8 lakhs.

A: The FFC, before it got merged into the FDC...its people must have felt that they should be right on the file, as they say, that they must send notices and see to it that all the money is realised so their liabilities are reduced and they can say there is no audit problem. I think this is what they must have done.

Q: Well, I hope this won't be pursued because it's got them all worried sick.

A: We will see how we can rationalise that. We certainly won't persecute people. The idea is to promote good films. In case after case, when I was a member of the Public Undertaking Committee, I found that crores of rupees were lost (on films). The government and the auditors repeatedly asked why the FFC was running, that it was a foolish venture. I can understand subsidising, but there is a limit... Supposing we give Rs 34 lakhs for making a film. The film is made but nobody sees it. Then what do we do? Now what you are saying is that not only should we have the film made but it should also be shown. Until it is shown, it has no meaning. So the business of showing will now be taken care of. Unless we talk more of that, getting good films made will not have a logical result.

Q: The FFC was a logical extension of setting up the Film Institute and therefore when this marvellous step was taken by the government, a climate was created for making good films. And I think it has happened. It will be a shame if that



When dreams are cast in moulds

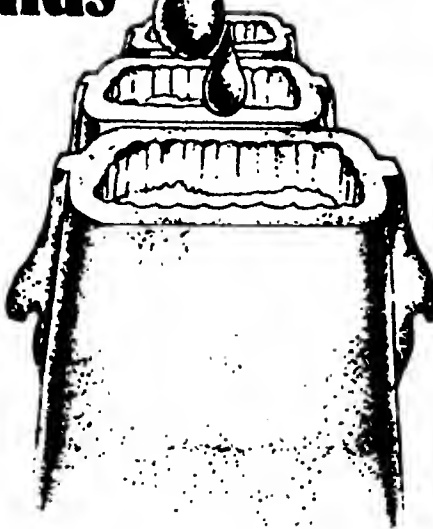
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were...

A: No, that won't be given up, that objective will be pursued. That I can assure you. We will help by taking care of exhibition, etc.

Q: I think it is quite right that the commercial cinema should not be alienated or brushed aside because, after all, they make 700 films a year and they have made India the biggest film producing country in the world.

A: And you will have to agree that some of the films are artistically very beautiful.

Q: Yes, but they are being influenced into thinking in a different way about the cinema as a result of the new movement. So there has to be some way of making sure that there is no conflict and confrontation between the two. It is quite a tricky situation because you must realise that the commercial cinema is not interested in the growth of this movement.

A: That is why I began by saying that this artificial division should be given up. There are only two types of films—as I said the other day in Bombay—good films and bad films. There is no such distinction as an art film and a commercial film.

Q: Some people say there is no such thing as a good film or a bad film. There is only a film.

A: No, there is. I will say that in all performing arts, the ultimate criterion which you apply, whether it is a dancer or musician or anybody, however perfect he may be, is the audience he gets. Unless he is seen or heard, it is of no use. You can take the history of any of the great people—great ballerinas, great artistes, if they are not heard or appreciated by the people, the greatness is not recognised.

Q: That is particularly true of cinema.

A: That is what I meant by good and bad. Bad is what people reject. In the ultimate analysis, it is what is accepted by the people, the audience and for whom the performer produces.

Q: But you also have to teach the audience, you have to give them a chance to see the good, you have to make it possible to expose them to good films. The Film Archives started that. For many years, you couldn't see good films but slowly the Film Archives were able to expose even the young new students to great cinema. Now what is happening is that very often Bombay film makers go to Poona to look at the film classics.

A: We must try to get films from all over the world. What is happening is that the influx into the country is mostly of Hollywood films. But there are other countries also which make beautiful films. Japan, Korea, Philippines, Indonesia and many others. How much do we know about these countries?

Q: NOTHING. In fact, India is the leader of the new Third World cinema movement to bring the cinemas of these countries together, and the only way you can

get to know the people of a country is through their cinema. But about censorship now...

A: Your favourite subject!

Q: I think it is important.

A: Let us consider the basic aspect in censorship. Why censorship? Should there be censorship or no censorship? I for one theoretically would say that in a free and democratic society, why should there be such a thing as censorship? When I first took over, my first remark to the Press people was "censor the word 'censor'." That is honestly my approach and attitude. But we also owe something to society. As you said just now, people have to be given, they have to be exposed to, good films and when you use the words good and bad, then the question of judgment comes in. This centres round two factors now, sex and violence. We must disabuse our mind of some of our concepts of, and approach to, sex. I have very liberal



One of the most natural expressions of human affection, in the proper sequence, in the proper context, is kissing.

views about sex and morality. I think the most moral relationship between a man and a woman or two persons is where there is mutuality—mutual respect, mutual regard, mutual love. If that is not there, then the physical relationship, which is in any case a most delicate relationship in human beings, can be the most depraving relationship. I think sex is very beautiful and should be beautiful. But when you try to vulgarise it, and depict it in a crude way, particularly in relation to woman, as if the woman is there only as an object of man's enjoyment and you try to depict or display the woman only from that angle for cheap titillation—if that is the only purpose—then I think it is vulgar. It is an insult to beauty, it is an insult to sex and an insult to womanhood.

Q: An insult to intelligence, in fact.

A: Yes, that it is.

Q: But about violence, about sex also, there is a school of thought that believes it has a cathartic value—the more you see it, the more you'll get it out of your system, and be free of it.

A: But there is such a dose of violence in some of our films and it still doesn't free you. It enslaves you. It is like drug addiction. In a free society why should there be a ban on drugs?... and there are people who argue, yes, why should there be? If people want to kill themselves by taking drugs, why should they not be allowed to do so? Fair enough. If that school of thought ultimately succeeds, then mass killings, mass murders, anything is good. But we are not in a society which believes in this. We do want people to live and let live. If that is the general approach, then we owe a duty to society according to the accepted norms of a society not to inject and give them this brain drugging, if I may say so, of violence and sex. But the question is who decides? I am of the view that the film industry should have an internal inbuilt censorship of their own. But they find that impossible because they have to compete with each other. One man makes a film which succeeds at the box office and immediately the moneylender says we want films of that type, you must put in a little more violence, a little more sex, some more cabarets, a little less clothes on Zeenat Aman or on beautiful film actresses. This is how it goes, the vicious circle.

Then I said, I will leave it to you, we will scrap the censor altogether. They replied that this would create another difficulty because then every magistrate at every local place would become a censor because under the ordinary law of the land, anyone can file a complaint and say this film is obscene and therefore should be banned. This would lead to corruption, delay, litigation, etc. This would not solve the problem. Therefore censorship has to be there. So it must play a healthy role. Let there be mutuality about how that should be done. I would like to involve the film industry people in every aspect and also the representatives of the people.

For example, there has been such a resentment and protest in the country by women about rape. Now I have seen and heard of many films which show rape scenes in a most gruesome manner, I have not understood what is the objective of showing that. Yet, it is there for all to see. If you accept that as all right, then why do you object to rape outside? You justify it by saying that ultimately it is all right in the film because the villain is defeated and he is caught. But the villain has had all the fun in the film. So people in private life also say, "Let's enjoy ourselves while we can, like the villain in the film. When we are caught, then that will be another matter". The villain has all the fun while the hero is suffering and wins with the help of the army or the police only in the end. Therefore, why be a suffering hero? Instead of that, be a villain and enjoy (yourself)! Do you want that to be shown or should it be curbed? If it has to be curbed, then censorship must be applied.

Q: Basically it again depends on

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the way anything is depicted. The form is important. A rape scene can be shown in such a manner as to elicit so much sympathy for the woman that even a potential rapist in the audience would be moved into vowing to himself that he would never do such a thing. Anyway, you have to apply censorship in a manner to portray reality, to allow the depiction of a normal relationship between men and women.

A: Yes, that is why I said I considered that instead of all the usual vulgarisms, one of most natural expressions of human affection, in the proper sequence, in the proper context, is kissing. But people took that out of context and tried to publicise only that.

Q: I think that is very important. I think that because they can't show normal human behaviour, they resort to all this titillation. Are you going to take up censorship of cinema in the Act?

A: I am. This Act has been on the anvil for a very long time. I think we will be able to put it before Parliament in the very near future. And there is also another Act which I am proposing, which is nearly ready and it is about the protection of employees in the film industry.

Q: If you can take another bold step, I would suggest that the film industry be accepted as an industry.

A: But that is universally agreed. That is what we will do.

Q: ANOTHER issue with which you have created a stir is your very forceful plea for introducing colour TV in India.

A: There has been a lot of confusion as far as colour TV is concerned. I have been saying that colour TV is not a luxury, it is modern technology, the latest technology. Today in the world outside, nobody has black and white TV, it's all colour. Even the countries all around us, smaller countries like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh have colour TV. Therefore, India cannot lag behind in technology. Technology and time wait for no one. We have to be up to date. Technology-wise, I have been saying that just as in the field of air travel... do we still insist on Dakotas? We have gone on to Boeings and Airbuses. No one questions why we must have an Airbus. Similarly, in every other field, particularly in the field of media, you can't afford to lag behind and television is a much, much more powerful medium than even the radio because of its audio-visual content and impact. How can you say a thing more forcefully, more effectively except in colour because nature is full of colour! It becomes even more important if you want to take TV to rural areas which is my main objective.

Q: The argument is basically over priorities. Even black and white TV in India has not got off the ground, programme-wise, as it were. Colour TV would mean so much more money.

A: I have got the whole thing

I want Doordarshan to be independent, disconnected from radio and other media. It must grow vertically.

examined. I have found that the cost is not so great precisely because TV is still in its infancy in our country. What we are doing at present is carrying on with this obsolete and out of date machinery which was gifted to us and which is in black and white. We will have to change it sooner or later. It has already outlived its usefulness. And then what is important is that the transmission would be the same. The transmission towers and the lights, etc., are all there. All that we are going to need is the cameras. Even there, we will have to go in for new cameras sooner or later. So the cost as far as telecasting and filming and preparing in the studios etc., are concerned will not be much more. We don't need different studios but some modifications maybe. As far as television from the telecasting point of view is concerned, the cost is not going to be very great.

Then comes the question of TV sets, the cost to the people who are going to buy them. I have asked the manufacturers of TV sets and they have told me that the real cost is that of the colour tube. As it is, today we are importing black and white tubes. If we import colour tubes, the cost would be around Rs 1,000 or 1,200 more. That is the only real cost component. The rest is all assembly and other things which are being done here. And if we have colour TV sets manufactured in India, there will be an export market. Today, there is no export market for black and white TV sets. Our country has the capacity to manufacture them even cheaper than other countries, so we can export them to other countries. One gentleman told me that we can export them even to the USA. That will be the extent of our competitive capacity! The cost of colour TV may be, to begin with, Rs 1,000 or 1,500 more. The reporter who had actually interviewed some people in the TV production line had said this very thing. But see the misconception in the Press generally because of pre-conceived prejudices and not looking to facts. They have distorted the picture.

Take another aspect. Suppose you had TV in all two lakh electrified villages. The sets would be paid for by the community centres and the panchayats. A panchayat which has property worth a lakh of rupees will gladly buy a TV set for Rs 6,000 or 7,000 because it means so much

People in the media must remain in the media. That is the number one thing.

to the whole community. So there, the cost, whether it is 5,000 or 10,000 does not make much difference. On top of that, if you produce on a large scale, the cost would come down. Then tomorrow, we might be able to produce colour tubes in this country. Electronics has a tremendous capacity for not only growth, but employment potential. That has been proved. I feel strongly that from whatever angle you look at it, colour television is a necessity and not a luxury. Sometimes when you look at flowers... I really don't know how in the villages you can show agriculture or flowers and different things in black and white. The other day I saw a film produced by Tatas on the environment. It was shown in the conference which was inaugurated by Mrs Indira Gandhi. Such a beautiful film, all in colour. The whole universe is full of colour. And I just whispered to Mrs Gandhi, "Imagine seeing this in black and white". And she agreed.

Q: Also school programmes.

A: Yes, school programmes, science, everything. How will you show them in black and white?

Q: The other thing is that television is a Central subject, but the provision of community sets is left to the state government. Now recently in the Bihar state Plan, they said the Central government wants us to provide sets in these areas, so they can do it themselves. We will not do it. This is what happened. For instance, Delhi Doordarshan's range has been extended through a series of relay transmission towers up to eastern UP. In Eastern UP where you can receive programmes from Delhi, there are no TV sets at all.

A: The reason being that we don't leave this to the panchayats. The state governments have their own financial restraints and constraints. Therefore, the state governments look at it this way. 'If you want to, you give us the sets'. But I am going to say this, I am going to ask the village panchayats, 'If you want a set, you buy a set. I will maintain it'. I will create a whole chain of workshops at subdivisional or even block levels of people who will maintain television sets through the very producers of television sets. This will also mean employment potential. The biggest snag in television, which we also feel here in the urban areas—you and I have a TV set—a little thing goes wrong, we just don't know what to do. And we don't want to fiddle with the thing. You call a man from the producers and he takes his time in coming. It is the servicing that is the problem. We must have a simultaneous servicing network, an efficient servicing network. And you take it from me, states or no states, I don't want the states to spend a farthing themselves. I will tell the panchayats. You want TV, I can show you TV through INSAT in two lakh electrified villages if I get the sanction for the grant segment. And the villages themselves will go in for

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television. They will contribute and buy a TV set. That is how it must get decentralised.

Q: Well, so far that has not been happening.

A: Lack of imagination.



: You were saying that we can't afford to lag behind in technology and therefore it is important, but what about management?

As far as TV is concerned, there is a failure of management for a variety of reasons. The picture today is that there is deep dissatisfaction and frustration among the people who work in it, there is practically contempt for it by people who watch it, there is no real carry-down to rural areas, stations are opened without really adequate facilities, and until you can really get what there is already working well, why expand it? In other words, you will continue to have programmes that don't satisfy, only they will be in colour.

A: It's like this. I agree there are shortcomings. All the things you say are there. But then as you rightly said, its shortcomings will be there whether you have colour or no colour. The shortcomings will be magnified, that's true, if they are in colour. But look, shortcomings of management, of software as we call it, these are the things that have to be attended to immediately and independently. We have only started doing that. I want Doordarshan to be an independent special TV disconnected from radio and other media. And it must grow vertically itself. There must be a feeling of belonging in the people and we must have people knowledgeable from outside to advise and even participate. These are some aspects on which I am already moving. And I am confident that what I call functional autonomy can succeed and can work.

Q: What do you mean by functional autonomy?

A: I'll tell you what I mean. Without the restraints and constraints, but functioning in the way you described just now. According to me, a person must have the scope to give of his best. I am interested in the results, as Pandit Nehru used to say, and not in grievances and complaints. So I would like to find the right man. Once you have decided that here is a person who knows his job, then give him full scope to produce and show results. And also select a team. Yes, that's professional management. If you do that...another most nagging thing in government I have noticed is financial inflexibility. I must confess ours is considered in government as a non-priority Ministry or department. Whether it is the Planning Commission or anyone else, if you ask for even a few rupees more, they just say no. Although the impact of the media is tremendous, people only view it in terms of rupees and therefore somehow up till now, this Ministry has been considered financially a low priority Ministry. Now I am thinking of proposals whereby we can

own ourselves and not be a burden on the treasury. If this can be done, then I will tell the government and the treasury, 'Look, the money that I am taking is only for the development of the media so there should be no obstruction'. Once we have some more financial flexibility, then we can allot our funds. Then we must allow our directors-general and others some authority. They should not have to go for every little thing to the Finance Ministry. Everything gets stuck because they have to go running up and down and wasting so much time and energy. Once these constraints are done away with, then we can give more scope to people in the creative field, people with creative talent, provide them the initiative. I am sure these things will come about. This is what I mean by functional autonomy.

Q: But the trouble is that there is also another aspect to it. The people in TV, the actual technicians who work with the medium, they still have to go to the Ministry for clearance for everything, often dealing with low level bureaucrats. A lot of their requests and requirements are turned down by people who don't really know what they are about. And this is not from the Finance Ministry to the I&B Ministry, but to TV from the I&B Ministry itself.

A: You will be surprised. Last year and the year before that when the economy drive was introduced by the previous government, mine was the only Ministry which showed over-enthusiasm in surrendering 30 per cent of the funds! As it is, we were starved and here are people who just do not implement even the planned programmes. The people in the Ministry have absolutely no idea about the media. I want that the men in the media should also have a hand in policy making. If that happens, then knowing where the shoe pinches, they will know exactly what are the requirements and these bottlenecks and red tapes can be removed.

Q: Will that really happen?

A: It can happen. Let us see. Because I remember this move was initiated by Mrs Gandhi herself. When she first came to this Ministry, she took a lot of initiative in reorganising it. She herself has excellent ideas. It was she who gave a new look to the Ministry. But after she became Prime Minister and other Ministers came and the constraints being what they are, we really got stuck somewhere on the way. I don't know where. So let us see what we can do.

Q: One of the things that media people feel, whether it is officials of AIR or TV or Films Division or whatever, everybody feels that all decisions in their field are taken by civil servants who have no faith, no commitment to the field. Would you not consider the possibility of the I&B Ministry being manned by the Information Service people who would come from different fields—radio, TV, films etc. because they have a commitment to what they are

doing?

A: Well, that is one idea. But the Information Service has also got bureaucratized.

Q: Don't you think in this age of very great specialisation, with the advance of technology in all the fields, you just have to know what you are talking about? Someone who belongs to an administrative service and moves within different Ministries cannot be in a position to take far reaching decisions.

A: What I was saying is that we should have a media service and not get people from just the IAS. IAS have brilliant chaps, there are certain people who know the field. So let them make a choice. Just as some people who go into the Foreign Service or some people go to the Railways. So we should have a media service wherein we can take men who are knowledgeable in the world of films, knowledgeable in the world of Radio or TV. Also publications. I would go still further. A man may not join the media service as such. He may be an expert outside, an excellent producer or a director or somebody in the field also have a talent for administration to some extent. We can have such a man on a contractual basis even in a policy-making role. Such things have been tried in other Ministries like steel, etc. Why can't we do it here? But I agree with you that this is a highly specialised, creative section or branch. So we must have a service manned by people who know the field and who know the job. That will be my effort.

Q: Or even within the IAS, let them opt for the area in which they want to specialise and remain in that service...

A: From wherever they come, I have nothing against the IAS. I know there are wonderful people in it, the cream of our country have gone into that service. Supposing there's a man from the IPS, but he has an inclination for this media, let him opt for it. I will give you an interesting example. We get a man who is from a state, normally the IAS. He comes on deputation from the state to the Centre. He becomes a joint secretary in my Ministry. We send him out very often, on some special courses on TV or films or other media. He gets the training and advantage, comes back, and soon thereafter, he is sent back to the state after his tenure is over, to become a revenue secretary or a health secretary in the state. He is a loss to me and to the country and to the media and also to the state in that respect. How does it help? So I am totally against this sort of waste of talent and energy. That is why people in the media must remain in the media. That is the number one thing. And even within the media I want them to specialise. The radio man stays in radio, the Doordarshan man stays in Doordarshan and grows in Doordarshan.

Q: That would be really something. We have all been saying for such a long time that this is what must be done about it.

Commercial cinema vs art films

A war with many battles lies ahead

IT all started with a letter from the Deputy Executive of Film Finance Corporation (FFC) A. B. Chandriamam to Mani Kaul, film director. Dated April 15, 1980 the letter was about Mr Kaul's loan account with the FFC for his Hindi film, *Ashad Ka Ek Din*. The letter went on: "As you are aware that the High Court has passed a decree against you in terms of the Arbitrator's Award... we request you to kindly pay the aforementioned sum (Rs 3,87,123.74) within 15 days of the date of receipt... failing which we shall be constrained to and shall consider execution of this decree." Hardly had the waves died down when the FFC burst an even bigger bombshell. And this time the blast was felt by the maker of *Garm Hawa*, M. S. Sathya. He received an identical decree which held the veiled threat of being dragged to court.

The paradox is that there is no such body as the FFC now. The FFC along with the IMPEC (Indian Motion Picture Export Council) have been dissolved and the place has been filled in by the newly-formed NFDC (National Film Development Corporation). The dissolution has

given rise to a great deal of heated debate between the commercial film-makers and the art film-makers. To add to this confusion there are the decrees issued to various film directors.

This is not the first time that decrees have been sent. According to the report of the Committee on Public Undertakings report to the Lok Sabha in 1975-76, the first time a decree was prepared by the FFC was as far back as April 1962 when Chitra Sharad got it for *Te Maze Ghar*.

What has happened is a sequel to a long-drawn controversy. The commercial cinema has traditionally criticised the indulging of a few creative people' (to quote an ex-Board man) at the expense of the 'real' cinema which reaches out to 90 million people a week and tried for some sort of governmental concessions for them. And the art film-makers have always been quite justifiably peeved that when it comes to saving the country's prestige in cinema it is their films which are entered in the top festivals all over the world. But when it comes to financing, these films are given miserly

treatment by the FFC which at times was even unable to give their 'renowned work' a decent release. This has been an old debate, but it has suddenly surfaced, because the government has resurrected an old I. K. Gujral dream, and is not looking for some people to take over the NFDC and give it some sort of shape.

Realising that this is the proper time, both sections have been lobbying for adequate representation on the board. The art film-makers, it is reliably learnt, have only one major demand: Satyajit Ray be made chairman of the NFDC. Kumar Sahani, the maker of *Maya Darpan* said: "The NFDC is supposed to be a development corporation, and must therefore differentiate from the FFC which was merely a financing body, and must take a more farsighted and visionary stand than the FFC could take". But the commercial film-makers lobby has been thinking otherwise. B. R. Chopra told me: "After all Satyajit Ray is a great man. How can I say anything against him? But I can say one thing, the NFDC shouldn't make the mistake of just turning into another FFC. It must consider the requirements of the other cinema as well."

The commercial film representatives won the first round. In the capital Mr G. P. Sippy and his friends, who are believed to have some influence with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, have succeeded in bulldozing the government into making some of its crucial decisions on personnel even before the National Film Policy Committee, set up two years ago, could come out with its recommendations.

As things stand today, however, Mr B. V. S. Raju, a financier and distributor of the South has been offered the post of chairman of the board. The other members include: G. P. Sippy, Gul Anand (a film exporter), Manmohan Krishna, K. N. Goyal (an industrialist who is totally unconnected with films), Ramchandra Bhate (the owner of the Indira Kitchen which distributes free food in Pune), Bhakta (a distributor from the South), Aruna Vasudev, Tapan Sinha, Basu Bhattacharya and as a consolation to the art-film makers Mrinal Sen.

The whole conflict stems from the question whether the NFDC should produce art films or merely concentrate on the distribution, channelisation of equipment and creation of an alternative government-controlled circuit. A spokesman of the commercial cinema is quoted as having said: "The area in which the NFDC could be most helpful is in the expansion

Satyajit Ray and Raj Kapoor exchanging greetings



of exhibition facilities...(it) could also play a useful role in the modernisation of the production sector which was now working with outdated equipment. It should import the most up-to-date cameras and other equipment — something that few individual producers could do... The thing it should not do is to finance movies... For even with enhanced resources the NFDC would not be able to finance only very few 'creative' film-makers... A much better use of these resources could be to use them for the development of cinema rather than 'good' cinema." (Emphasis not the author's).

This is where the trouble between Mani Kaul and the FFC comes in. It has been alleged, without much justification, that the decision by a caretaker FFC to send these decrees has been engineered by the commercial film people. Despite all attempts made by the FFC to recover the Rs 43 lakhs, the money will never probably come back. This, despite the presence of 'renowned' names on the FFC board like Kaul, Satyujit Ray (whose producer of *Shaitanji Ka Khiladi*, Suresh Jindal is also in trouble over that film) and M. S. Sathya.

The controversy, however, has provided a common platform to many on which to unite and extract more concessions on behalf of the NFDC. Mani Kaul wrote a letter to Mrs Indira Gandhi in which he said: "... around 1988 under your personal initiative a new movement in cinema was made possible in India...(it was) a pioneering act and indeed very soon established a distinct new cinema popularly referred to as the New Wave... That wide commitment has been totally forgotten, personally I am convinced that the FFC has not only taken an opposite road to what you had envisioned and initiated but also not adequately represented our case in the Government of India... All my serious work has been deeply distracted by the economic problems that I have been facing... Leaving aside the personal income that remains shamelessly low... even the FFC is now blatantly claiming its money with years of interest accumulation". Mani Kaul has reportedly received a note from the Information Ministry which states that his letter to the Prime Minister is 'urgently under consideration'.

However on May 20, Mr Satyajit Ray announced his unavailability for the post of the chairman of the National Film Development Council in a letter to those who were trying for his nomination. In his letter to the forum of progressive filmmakers consisting of M. S. Sathya, Shyam Benegal, Basu Bhattacharya, Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani, Mr Ray said: "The problems of creative filmmakers in India are so enormous that a creative filmmaker must accept this position (chairmanship of the NFDC) only at the expense of his creativity".

ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA,
Bombay

Kamdeo Singh's mafia strikes again



Kamdeo Singh: victim of a brutal attack

KAMDEO SINGH'S mafia, now leaderless (SUNDAY, May 11) has taken its first revenge. The victim: a headmaster of Pansala middle school, called Kamdeo Singh. He was a resident of Bagdov village, adjacent to Nayaagon of Kamdeo Singh, and a lifelong CPI activist. The war between Kamdeo's gang and the CPI continues.

On May 17, at midday, the stocky Kamdeo Singh was cycling back to his school from the block development office of Begusarai after collecting the salaries. Suddenly, a jeep dashed against his bicycle. He fell on the ground. As he was lying there, helpless, he was surrounded by an armed group, and brutally assaulted. He sustained about half a dozen deep stab injuries. As if this was not enough the assailants gouged out one of the eyes. And all this happened on the busy Assam road, between Kathopur and Lakho petrol pump. Kamdeo Singh was taken to Begusarai hospital, then finally to Patna hospital, where on May 18, he died. He left behind a widow, four daughters and three sons. This was a typical mafia style murder.

The marriage of Kamdeo Singh's youngest daughter was fixed for June 23, (it has now been postponed indefinitely). After just 30 days, the Kamdeo mafia had returned to the path of violence: Kamdeo Singh was killed by the

police on April 18. Ironically, the only son of Kamdeo Singh has lodged a case of cold-blooded "murder" of his father against the Superintendent of Police, Begusarai, the D.S.P. of Central Reserve Police task force and many other sepoyas.

Kamdeo Singh's family had been opposing Kamdeo Singh for the last 20 years, and paying a price. His brother Ram Singh was murdered by Kamdeo's men in 1981. The case is still in court: two old gangsters of Kamdeo's mafia, Brahmedeo and Chandradeo were named as the main accused. The two are brothers, and were once the righthand men of Kamdeo Singh.

When Ram Singh was killed, his son Awadesh was only five years old. When Awadesh became older, he took revenge for his father's murder: he killed Ghuna Singh, another brother of Chandradeo. Now, it is believed, Brahmedeo has killed Kamdeo Singh. Awadesh's uncle, in another act of this drama of revenge. Another theory maintains that Kamdeo Singh's murder was a simple act of crime. Dacoits who knew of his daughter's wedding, assumed he was carrying a lot of money and robbed and killed him. But the CPI people are posing the simple question: if the motive behind the murder was purely loot, why did the "ordinary" goondas kill the man?

ARUN RANJAN, Patna

Valley in the shadow of death

Green signal for the Silent Valley project

MR JOSEPH JOHN of the "Friends of the Trees" organisation must be a very sad man. Despite his massive efforts to stop the Silent Valley Project, the Kerala government has decided to go ahead with the hydel project and is now waiting for the Prime Minister's clearance. It is feared that the implementation of the project will endanger 50 million year-old rain forests, rare flora and fauna.

The Kerala government's stand on the issue was explained by the Minister of Power, Mr R. Badakrishna Pillai who claims that the government has had an open mind on the issue and was prompted by a favourable consensus of scientific opinion to arrive at its present decision. He assured that when construction began, every precaution would be taken to protect the environmental balance of the area.

It may be recalled that work on the project was suspended last year on the direct orders of the Prime Minister following a series of objections raised by several scientists and environmentalists. Organisations like the World Wildlife Fund and the Natural History Society of Bombay also objected. These organisations felt that the implementation of the project would endanger rare species of flora and fauna. According to

them the Silent Valley is one of the last remaining virgin forests—a contention which is refuted by the Kerala government and the State Electricity Board on the ground that the Silent Valley had "lost its virginity long ago" for trees had been felled for many years over the past. Not surprisingly, therefore, the many assurances of the Kerala government has done little to dispel the fears of the environmentalists. The claims of the state's Minister of Power that the project has won the support of a majority of scientists has been widely challenged. Mr Joseph John, a journalist and the vice-president of the "Friends of the Trees" told me that he was one of the participants in the April 26, 1980 conference that discussed the issue. Said he: "But for the three of us who opposed the project, the central officials kept mum—a whole lot of hand-picked scientists were drawn by the State Electricity Board who masterminded a farce out of the whole seminar and were part of the majority that supported the project. We were assured by the government that the issue was not going to be decided by a majority vote. Yet, this was exactly what the government did. It did not even wait for the report of the central team of scientists who

visited the Valley recently at the centre's insistence. Whether the government is able to persuade New Delhi to fall in line or not, it is simply unfair to the people of Kerala that the State government should be guided by narrow compulsions, rather than by well thought-out imperatives of ecology and sound economy". Mr John hoped that the centre would not be persuaded into clearing this ill-advised, destructive and wasteful project.

Unfortunately, the main reason for the implementation of the project, is not the Electricity Board's interest in ensuring the power supply to all consumers in Kerala or in promoting industrial development. According to a source in the Electricity Board, the main activities of the board were to make commercial profits by producing more electricity and selling the surplus power to the neighbouring states. The state will also derive benefits from the felled trees. But one question remains to be answered: Should the 50-million-year-old natural wealth of Silent Valley be sacrificed for the ambitious plans of a few persons in the Kerala Electricity Board and a handful of politicians?

G S KARTHA, Trivandrum

New hope for Tibetan refugees

Bhutan revokes deportation order

FOR thousand Tibetan refugee in Bhutan can breathe easily once more. Originally threatened with deportation back to their native land, they were assured on March 19 this year that no such thing would happen. According to Dawa Tsering, Bhutan's Foreign Minister, no Tibetan refugee will be expelled. There were several factors that influenced the decision. Bhutan, as a member of the UNO, could hardly be expected to go against the international convention which forbids the deportation of refugees to their homeland. Secondly, both Tibet and Bhutan share a common religion. And lastly, the volte face in Thimpu's stand could probably be traced to the visit of the Bhutanese monarch, Jigme Singhe Wangchuk, to New Delhi in February this year and his subsequent meeting with Mrs Gandhi.

Even when she was out of power, Mrs Gandhi kept a close watch on the plight of Tibetan refugees in Bhutan and the first hint that she intended to take a positive step towards a solution came in January this year. A delegation of the Tibetan Youth Congress, led by its vice president Lobsang Chopel, met Mrs Gan-

dhi at her residence on January 9. The latter assured the members of the delegation that she would look into the affair. The Prime Minister kept her promise. She even went so far as to reverse the Janata Government's decision banning Tibetan refugees from Bhutan from entry into India. Later, in March, External Affairs Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao stated in the Rajya Sabha that India would consider the question of rehabilitating Tibetan refugees who wanted to leave Bhutan. These developments sent a wave of relief throughout Tibetan refugee camps in the country.

In 1974, the allegation that some Tibetan refugees had taken part in a plot to assassinate the present Bhutanese king's father caused great tension. This tension was heightened in 1978, by the refugees' refusal to take up Bhutanese citizenship despite repeated insistence by the Bhutanese government to do so. As a result of this refusal the Bhutanese government had been hard on the refugees. Movements of the Tibetan outside their settlements was forbidden; their activities were restricted; Tibetan children studying in Darjeeling and

Kalimpong were either prevented from coming back home or from going back to their schools after the holidays were over. As the restrictions on the refugees grew heavier the World Press focussed on the issue.

At a recent Press conference in New Delhi, the Bhutanese King declared that the Tibetans created "an internal threat" and that "Bhutan cannot afford to take a risk and create a Tibetan state within Bhutan". But the Bhutanese Government's desire to evict the Tibetan refugees did not stem from political reasons only. For centuries, the Tibetans among others, had dominated Himalayan trade and this apparently evoked considerable antipathy among the locals against the refugees. The second reason stems from religious grounds. Of the four distinct Buddhist sects, while the refugees belong to the Gelugpa sect, with the Dalai Lama as the supreme head, the Bhutanese belong to the Kargulpa sect for whom the Dalai Lama is on an equal footing with the King of Bhutan.

A J. SINGH, Dharmasala

A reprieve for anticipatory bail

THE first comment that one feels impelled to make on the Supreme Court's recent judgment on anticipatory bail is to express regret at the extreme delay in its pronouncement.

A full bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court gave a very narrow and restrictive interpretation of the scope of the power to grant anticipatory bail. The applicant was Mr Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia, Minister of Irrigation and Power in the Congress Ministry in power in Punjab in 1977. Grave allegations of political corruption were made against him and others whereupon applications were filed in the High Court of Punjab and Haryana under section 438 praying that the appellant be directed to be released on bail in the event of their arrest on those charges. The High Court dismissed the application on September 13, 1977. The Supreme Court allowed the appeal only on April 9, 1980. Pray, why this extreme delay in a matter affecting the citizen's liberty?

Fortunately, the Supreme Court's interpretation is liberal and in favour of individual liberty. The old Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 conferred no power on the High Courts to grant anticipatory bail. The High Courts differed on the question whether silence meant denial of power. However, in 1969 the Law Commission observed, "The necessity for granting anticipatory bail arises mainly because sometimes influential persons try to implicate their rivals in false cases for the purpose of disgracing them or for other purposes by getting them detained in jail for some days. In recent times, with the accentuation of political rivalry, this tendency is showing signs of steady increase. Apart from false cases, where there are reasonable grounds of holding that a person accused of an offence is not likely to abscond, or otherwise misuse his liberty while on bail, there seems no justification to require him first to submit to custody remain in prison for some days and then apply for bail." How prophetic!

This was the genesis of section 438 of the new Criminal Procedure Code 1973. It provides "(1) When any person has reason to believe that he may be arrested on an accusation of having committed a non-bailable offence, he may apply to the High Court or the Court of Session for a direction under this section; and that Court may if it thinks fit, direct

Civil Liberties

By A. G. NOORANI

that in the event of such arrest, he shall be released on bail". Sub-section (2) empowers the Court to impose conditions.

Generally, bail is granted if there is good assurance that the accused will not abscond but take his trial. Instead of exposing him to the humiliation of arrest and then releasing him on bail, why not grant bail earlier? The logic is unanswerable and the court accepted it in words which suggest a keen awareness of our none too happy conditions: "No one can accuse the police of possessing a healing touch nor, in deed, does anyone have misgivings in regard to constraints consequent upon confinement in police custody. But, society has come to accept and acquiesce in all that follows upon a police arrest with a certain amount of sang-froid, in so far as the ordinary rut of criminal investigation is concerned. ...When the even flow of life becomes turbid, the police can be called upon to inquire into charges arising out of political antagonism. The powerful processes of criminal law can then be perverted for achieving extraneous ends. Attendant upon such investigations, when the police are not free agents within their sphere of duty, is a great amount of inconvenience, harassment and humiliation."

The issue before the Supreme Court was whether the power to grant anticipatory bail ought to be left to the discretion of the court concerned, depending on the facts and circumstances of each case or it should be conditional upon the applicant showing that he is likely to be arrested for an ulterior motive. This would cast the onus of proof on the citizen.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court characterised it as an extraordinary power which must be sparingly exercised in exceptional cases only. It laid down a series of restrictive guidelines. The Supreme Court rejected the restrictive approach totally. Section 438 did not contain such restrictions on the power. Why should the courts impose them and thus legislate to the detriment of the citizen? "This is especially true when the statutory provision which

calls for consideration is designed to secure a valuable right like the right to personal freedom and involves the application of a presumption as salutary and deep-grained in our Criminal Jurisprudence as the presumption of innocence."

The court pointed out that an order of anticipatory bail does not in any way take away from the police their right to investigate into charges made or to be made against the person released on bail. "In fact, two of the usual conditions incorporated in a direction issued under Section 438(1) are those recommended in sub-section (2) which require the applicant to co-operate with the police and to assure that he shall not tamper with the witnesses during and alter the investigation. While granting relief under section 438 (1), appropriate conditions can be imposed under section 438 (2) so as to ensure an uninterrupted investigation. One of such conditions can even be that in the event of the police making out a case of a likely discovery under section 27 of the Evidence Act, the person released on bail shall be liable to be taken in police custody for facilitating the discovery."

The Court referred to the Meerut Conspiracy Cases in which it was held that grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception. An accused person who enjoys freedom is in a much better position to look after his case and to properly defend himself than if he were in custody. The main test is whether the accused will abscond. On this point the remarks of Lord Russell, one of the greatest advocates of all time, are apt: "It was not the poorer classes who did not appear, for their circumstances were such as to tie them to the place where they carried on their work. They had not the golden wings with which they fly from justice."

Finally, the Supreme Court emphasised that anticipatory bail can be asked for only if there is reasonable belief about the imminence of arrest. It can be invoked before as well as after the filing of an FIR but before arrest. A "blanket order" is not permissible; namely, release "whenever arrested for whichever offence whatsoever." The order must be founded on reasonable apprehension of arrest. "The Court which grants anticipatory bail must take care to specify the offence or offences in respect of which alone the order will be effective. The power should not be exercised in a vacuum."

Wrongly labelled

By PRITISH NANDY

A DISHONEST policeman is not such a rare thing any more. Anywhere in the world, for that matter. But when that dishonest policeman also happens to be a rather accomplished poet and his publishers happen to be among the most distinguished promoters of contemporary Indian writing, one is a trifle worried. Particularly when the policeman happens to edit a wrongly-titled, badly-compiled, misleading, motivated and utterly trite anthology of poems, one is worried not for the policeman but for the records. After all, Vikas are distinguished publishers, and anything they publish is likely to find itself catalogued, indexed and preserved for posterity.

Sad. Not because I have an axe to grind. (Yes, you are right: I am not in the anthology.) Nor because I have myself edited some equally well-meaning but equally puerile anthologies in my time. Sad because Keki Daruwalla had so many landmarks to go by. Some of my anthologies were not too great, true. But that was because I was trying to set landmarks in the wilderness, to do first-time anthologies that no publishers were willing to burn their fingers with.

Daruwalla had no such problem. There were many landmarks already set. By anthologists like Gauri Deshpande, Howard Sergeant, Saleem Peeradina, Howard McCord, R. Parthasarathy, A. N. Dwivedi, P. Lal, V. K. Gokak and yours sincerely. None of these was competent. But one learns. By observing the mistakes that others make and by keeping the windows of one's own mind open. Not by playing games of literary politics. Nor by deliberately misleading the lost children wandering in the wilderness of our groves of academe.

But first of all, let us set our records straight. This is not an anthology of modern Indian poetry. It is an anthology of modern Indian poetry in English. So if you are looking for the incredible diversity of contemporary poetry in the different Indian literatures, do not waste Rs 80 and buy this book. You will not find Suresh Joshi, Shrikant Verma, Ghulam Mohammad Shikhi, Sadanand Rage or Shanmuga Subbiah here—even though the title says *Two Decades of Indian Poetry*. Twelve of the 17 poets here belong to Bombay city. One lives in Hyderabad, another in Allahabad and one in Cuttack. The remaining live overseas. America, to be precise. In other words, one would not be far wrong to call this book *Two Decades of Indian Poetry in English Written in Bombay and Re-*

presenting a Particular School or in brief, The Gang.

One has nothing against *The Gang*. Except that it seems to be the deliberate creation of an academic establishment. Some of the poets are certainly very good. Quite a few of them are competent. But to perpetuate them for all time is to create the impression that these are the only poets around in the Indian literary scenario and that even in the Indo-English literary world no one new has arrived in a long time. Both are false impressions.

Many of the other Indian literatures are as active, and often more prolific than the Indo-English scene. Take Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi and Kannada for instance. And on the Indo-English scene there are many talented young writers knocking at the door. What they do not get is enough opportunity, enough recognition. The Writers Workshop of Calcutta played a seminal role in the 'sixties, to encourage and publish young and unknown writers. Most of us were discovered and helped along by P. Lal, a debt few of us are today willing to acknowledge. The fact that the Writers Workshop later became, in the 'seventies, a kind of money-making machine and abdicated its creative role of the 'sixties cannot detract from the fact that most of us owe to Lal the primal impetus to publish.

But, generally speaking, few Indian poets in English have an actual readership. Fewer still find a respectable publisher. Or any publisher, for that matter. And only perhaps two or three manage to sell out their entire editions. But instead of respecting readership as an indicator of some literary success, the arbiters of our destiny—anthologists, academics, award-giving bodies and even the mafia that reviews our books—believe that popularity is shameful, there is something wrong with a sell-out edition. There is this strange, naive belief that a poet must be obscure, must be difficult to read and comprehend, and must find no readership, no publisher. And, if published, it must never, never sell. I remember a discussion with the head of a publishing firm who told me that they only believe in publishing those books of poetry that others would not dare touch or comprehend. Being a university publisher, he had no shareholders to report to—but it still strikes me as strange that he should have published the work of four poets and one anthology, none of which has sold more than half its meagre print order. That he should do this is not strange—every publisher gets the writers it deserves. What is strange is that he should take this on as a predetermined publishing policy.

Look at the best poets and fiction writers in the languages. While it is true that the Bimal Mishra and Gulshan Nandas rule the numbers game, it is equally true that some of the best writers in the land are also

Poetry reading session at All India Radio, Calcutta



among the most popular. Poets like Shrikant Verma, Shakti Chattopadhyay, Kamala Das, Amrita Pritam, Akhtarul Inan and Gopalkrishna Adiga, for instance, to make a representative cross-section. Or fiction writers like Sunil Gangopadhyay, Nirmal Verma, Ashokamitram and Rajinder Singh Bedi. Sandipan Chattopadhyay is a little-magazine writer in Bengali—but look at his readership! At the Calcutta Book Fair one year, his bulging pockets were so full with currency notes from the sale of his delightful, zany little minibooks that he carried the extra notes in a large cup on his head. The public is not so stupid as some of our less successful writers expect us to believe. Or as the academic establishment has always tried to sell us.

But popularity is not just taboo. There are other kinds of politics at work as well. Always. Daruwalla's anthology leaves out Parthasarathy. Parthasarathy's anthology leaves out Adi Jussawalla. Jussawalla's anthology leaves out Parthasarathy and Saleem Peeradina. Saleem Peeradina's anthology leaves out Shiv K. Kumar and P. Lal. So does Gauri Deshpande's. And this goes on. Until someone like P. Lal comes in and publishes *everyone*, to produce an anthology that is as bad as the others, without even the redeeming grace of selectivity. It is this subterranean politics of the scene that might explain why Indo-English poetry still remains in the rut, despite the fact that it displays such an exciting array of talent.

A literary scene that can produce in two decades such a rich harvest of poets has nothing to be ashamed of. And yet Daruwalla's introduction, prolix and pathetic in its simplicity, and almost verging on the naive, does not really give the reader an insight into this exciting scenario. The intellectual intensity of Nissim Ezekiel's poetry; the anguished private voice of Kamala Das, hauntingly original; the rich and insightful world of details that A. K. Ramanujan conjures; the bitter wit of Eunice deSouza; the careful and detailed craftsmanship of Jayanta Mahapatra, unmatched by any other poet on the scene; the striking visual quality of Arun Kolatkar's poetry; the exciting experiments of Deba Pattnaik; and the rich, autobiographical content that makes Daruwalla's own poetry so delightfully immediate, so powerful.

But what is even more fascinating about the scene is that there are so many others clamouring for a place in the sun. P. Lal's anthology, produced many years ago and flawed in many ways, managed to catch that spirit. That exciting atmosphere of challenge and attempt, success and failure in which countless young, unknown writers are trying to carve out a private niche. Few of them succeed, true. Most fail. Yet, despite the absence of magazine outlets, encouraging publishers, an active little magazine scene, and awards and accolades, they pursue their destiny with rare dedication and courage.

Despite all this, anthologists like Daruwalla and Parthasarathy refuse to look beyond the charmed circle, beyond the smalltime politics of the status quo. This is what is wrong with us. This is what is wrong with the scene.

It is now time to take a fresh look at what is happening around us. To trace its new dynamics, its new urges. The compulsions of the 'sixties are over, even if the errant policeman refuses to recognise this. It is time to give up those righteous attacks on Sri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu. No one considers them writers any more. Except perhaps that prehistoric body called the Sahitya Akademi, now thankfully in well-deserved disrepute. No one reads Aurobindo's poetry seriously these days. He, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt and the others like Manmohan Ghosh are pathetic symbols of a past we have long since given up. My introduction to an anthology eight long years ago tried to demolish their so-called heritage. K. Raghavendra Rao and P. Lal had attacked it even earlier, in their manifesto for the 'sixties. The sacred cows have all been slaughtered and it is now time to show what we are all capable of, instead of tilting lances at phantom windmills.

This would demand honesty.

How many anthologists are capable of this?

Two decades of Indian Poetry: 1960-1980, edited by Keki N. Daruwalla, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd Rs 60

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THE WORLD

Pierre-less

It's been a good year for Canada's Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau—at least till the end of May. All Canadians minus the Quebecois thanked him for averting the break-up of Canada when the Quebec separatists led by Rene Levesque and his Parti Quebecois were defeated in the referendum on May 20. Monsieur Levesque has been fighting for a separate and independent Quebec since October 1968. His defeat has, however, widened the division between four-fifths of the population who speak French and the remainder who speak English, Polish and German. Many who speak French want Quebec to remain a part of Canada.

Pierre Trudeau



Blue babies

One afternoon while Gondo's parents were away from home, Gondo invited his elementary school friends to his place at Jakarta. To entertain his little guests he screened the video-cassettes his parents had brought from abroad. As they watched the blatant sexual images on the screen their immediate reaction was of horror. After a few minutes, they got used to it and were fascinated. Since then the blue film session with the audience of 8-year-olds became a regular affair. But the teachers smelt something and soon the room was empty.

IF it could save...



A dose of IF

The spectre of cancer looms large — in USA alone 405,000 people will die and within the next year one million new cases will be diagnosed. There is little that man can do against the dreaded disease although there are ways of alleviating the pain through surgery, radiation or chemotherapy. But that only lessens the pain for only a few more years. Two-thirds of all victims die

of the disease ultimately. But yet man has done something. He has discovered IF or the wonder drug known as Interferon. Tiny quantities of the drug which is a natural substance produced in minute amounts by the body are being administered throughout the USA. A dose of the reddish liquid is shown by a researcher at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

Kenneth the conqueror



Kenneth Kerr in his Conqueror

This is a man with the spirit of adventure in his blood. 28-year-old Royal Navy electronics technician Kenneth Kerr — a Scotsman — a l w a y s thought of the sea. He put his thoughts into action and ordered him-

self the smallest boat ever to sail the Atlantic. His 13 ft. glass-fibre dinghy is called the "Bass-Conqueror" and he plans to row from Newfoundland to Ireland in what has been called a 'marathon' attempt by many.

Passionate memory

It all began with history and later became tradition. When the Black Plague ended in 1633 in Europe the leaders of the Church and the State of the German Roman Empire took the vow of performing a Passion Play every ten years as a means of thanksgiving for getting rid of the killer. The



Rudi Zwink: Jesus Christ
Irmi Dengg: Maria, in
this year's Oberammergau

first performance was seen in 1634. This year a performance of the Passion Play or Oberammergau as it is called, is due. The present text of the play dates back to the 1700s. Although the play is one of thanksgiving the people did not think so in 1977 when the citizens were divided into a number of groups, over the version of the Play. Some thought it had definite anti-semitic leanings while others thought it hadn't. At last some anti-Jewish parts were cut out in accordance with the Second Vatican Council. The timing of the play was reduced by one hour. The Oberammergau this year will be performed a hundred time before a capacity crowd of 5,000,000. And all the performances are sold out.



Kim: No more dates

DANNY is directing N. N. Sippy's *Phir Wohi Raat* and causing problems for producers who had signed him and Kim as co-stars in a number of films. The poor producers have been made to give an undertaking that Kim will not be asked for dates till she completes her first assignment in N. N. Sippy's production. Danny, it appears, knows which side his bread is buttered.

IT isn't just the eternal director-actor feud between *Vijay Anand* and *Dharmendra*: the two never really got along famously. They are together once again in *Rajput* and finding it difficult going. The other day, Dharmendra turned up at the sets completely drunk and asked to be relieved. Vijay lost his shirt and gave him a mouthful while producers Mushir and Riaz lost a day and a good bit of dough.

IT is common knowledge that stars play truant. But anyone heard a director putting up his price? *Raj Khosla*—the big name, sure-seller with five ventures currently on the floors—is making a new producer run around in circles. The latter, who signed Raj a year ago, finally managed to get a date recently, only to discover that the director had given the same date, the same time, at the same studio, to another producer as well. Then the director went underground and it took the producer

KHAAS BAAT

three days to locate him. These are styles of stars which Raj Khosla has adopted.

AFTER two successive flops, *Mehmood* is in a tight spot. He wanted to flee to the USA. Actually that would have been quite convenient as his wife is an American citizen. But, when he started disposing of some of his property as a prelude to his departure, the income-tax people got the scent. He has now been directed against selling or transferring his assets before clearing his tax arrears. Will someone come to the comedian's rescue?

SHOMU MUKHERJEE is in the soup again; and this time it is not entirely his fault. For starters, he has *Rajesh Khanna* and *Tina Munim* starring opposite each other in his movie *Fifty Fifty* and everyone knows that the two stars are not on very good terms. As if that is not bad enough,

Rajesh and *Shomu* are also victims of an ego clash. *Shomu* brags that he signed *Rajesh* when he was down in the doldrums, but *Rajesh* doesn't share that opinion. Then there was this recent incident on the sets when *Rajesh* and *Tina* came face to face before the camera. Normally, *Rajesh* has his say during every aspect of the shooting, but that day he decided that *Tina*'s costume—which was quite fascinating — was very elegant and that she looked extremely photogenic. On the other hand, he felt, he wasn't faring so well by way of comparison. What made it worse was that *Tina* was facing the camera and he wasn't. He was so upset that shooting had to be suspended for a few hours. And *Shomu*'s reaction? "I'm fed up," he says.

FEW heroines are willing to work with *Rajesh*, so he has managed to rope in newcomer *Poonam*



Tina: One up on Rajesh

Dhillon, who starred with him in *Red Rose*. Now, for every picture he signs, he recommends *Poonam*'s name as well. A smart move, that. She is still a *bachchi* so he can monopolise her. It's not that easy for him to monopolise other heroines.

ANYONE know what price *Amitabh Bachchan* charges for a picture? Twenty lakhs? Twenty-five lakhs? Thirty lakhs? He has his own method of accounting which has a fixed ratio for black and white to colour films. There is another factor as well. After he learns the territory price (which his producers charge) he takes a percentage and adds it onto his price tag. The reason? "Since you are getting that price on my name, why not let me charge as well?"

EVERYONE knows that star romances help a picture no end. For instance they lead to early completion. But the reverse logic works true as well, as it did in the case of *Habba Khatoon*. The movie which starred *Sanjay Khan* and *Zeena Aman* met with serious problems when the film was just about to go on the floors. When relations became strained between the two stars, the fallout naturally had its effect on the movie. Neither wanted to co-star with the other, with the net result that the film had to be abandoned and the producer had to write off the investment.

Dharmendra:
The Rajput touch



KHAAS BAAT

THE Madras film heroines seem to be obsessed with make-up. Cameraman Ashok Kumar was shocked to see Vijaya on the set of the new Tamil film *Rani*. "She is so fair", he kept muttering, "then why apply make-up"? But then Vijaya has to keep up appearances, to win fresh contracts. Despite her success last year, her career has not really taken off. Even Kishore Kumar's *Chalti Ka Naam Zindagi* in which she plays a South Indian film actress is yet to be released.

LATHA must be happy to know that MGR's *Idhudhan En Badil* wasn't completed on time. For all you know the film may be abandoned, and the young teenager heroine (whose identity isn't revealed as yet) may not have a chance to make it—not with MGR. Latha must have been sore as MGR preferred a younger heroine to boost up the box-office prospects of the film.

Is it true that the character actor Veenkura Adai Moorthy was the man who made Shoba's horoscope? It seems quite a few people

are asking him for his informal advice these days.

SRIPRIYA'S film *Natchathiram* is limping after an excellent opening. Its theme revolves around the tragic life of a film heroine and is being advertised more vigorously following Shoba's death. Why did a famous actress commit suicide? asks the advertisement. Who drove her to the point of no return? Was it her husband or her lover? The heavy advertisement campaign hasn't really helped much though.

A NUMBER of old MGR hits produced by his friend, ex Minister R. M. Vicerapan, were screened in the rural Tamil Nadu to keep the election-audiences mollified. MGR often turned up ten hours late for the meetings which were nevertheless well attended. On certain occasions, not only were the films shown twice to the same crowd but the speakers had to repeat their speeches over and again till MGR arrived.

SIVAJI GANESAN took an active part in the campaign which came to a brief halt when he was hit by a



Vikram and Seema in "Pathai Marinaal"

missile and was hospitalised. He promptly blamed the AIADMK. MGR hoped that Sivaji would henceforth take precautionary measures against such attacks.

TAMIL producers are willing to cast the Kannada actor Sundar in "softer" roles despite a shoddy performance in his maiden Tamil film *Thappu Thalagal*. Sundar is the best among the artists in *Poothata Pottukul*, the new film by J. Mahendran. The film is about the hidden sexual frustrations of sinners. Though visually attractive and well acted, the film isn't doing as well as Mahendran's previous two films.

A YOUNG hero suggested to producer Sankaran Nair to make a version of *Kramer vs Kramer* much before the *Dustin Hoffman* film went to the sets. But Nair wanted to adopt one of *Harold Robbins*' books. Result? *Chadabimbam* a tame film revolving around a nympho, her daughter and the bloke who makes it both with the daughter and the mother. Originally,

the film was supposed to contain spicy scenes but the producers decided to make a clean film out of this inorbid story. Naturally, the film didn't do too well. Is Sankaran regretting that he didn't accept the suggestion of his young hero?

VIDHUBALA has decided to quit movies at last. When she failed to do well in commercial movies she switched on to the arty-arty kind of films. She must have got bored with them too.

CHEMMEEN, the sensational Malayalam award-winner is now being dubbed into Hindi. Surely, its producer has noticed the success of the dubbed version of Malayalam soft porno films—including *Man Ka Aangan*. The heroine Sheela who played a fisherman's daughter in *Chemmeen* was rather impressive. And surely Sheela is much more attractive than *Jayabharathy* of *Man Ka Aangan*.

PIOUSJI



Sivaji



DS-4004 D

Double Seven

Beginning June 8

This week the Sun alone is in Taurus, Mercury and Venus are in Gemini, Rahu is in Cancer and Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are conjoined in Leo. Uranus is in Libra, Neptune is in Scorpio, and Ketu is in Capricorn. The moon will be moving through Aries, Taurus and Gemini from Pisces.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) Your health will improve and your children will make rapid progress. This week is most favourable for property deals, new investments, law-suits and official transactions. You may have to go on a journey. Check outbreaks of temper. Avoid impulsive actions. Accept advice from elders. Exercise tact in all your affairs. **Good dates:** 8, 10, 12 and 14. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 1. **Favourable directions:** South and West.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) You will reap rich rewards of your own industry and initiative. Curb the tendency to have a good time at all costs. Seek and act upon the advice of elders. Attend to your professional and business interests. The domestic front will remain a source of joy and happiness. Tact and circumspection in dealing with the opposite sex are a must. **Good dates:** 9, 11, 12 and 14. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 2 and 7. **Favourable directions:** North and West.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) This week begins on a cheerful note promising financial benefits of a permanent nature. Recognition and invaluable help from employers and elders are likely. Be quick in making decisions in all your business efforts. A favourable week for marriage. Refrain from gambling and betting. Make changes if you so desire. A good time for travel and intellectual activities. **Good dates:** 8, 9, 11 and 13. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 10. **Favourable direction:** South.



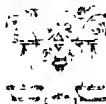
CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Later changes, new ventures and travel. You may be faced with difficulties and unexpected reversals beyond your control. Nevertheless help from an unexpected source will be forthcoming. Otherwise, you will have a happy and pleasurable time. Seek and act upon advice of elderly females. Peruse carefully all documents and keep them in safe custody. **Good dates:** 11, 13, 14 and 8. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** West.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) Do not take hasty decisions. Also refrain from making impulsive changes. Do not squander your resources in doubtful pleasures, needless luxuries and worthless friends. Pay heed to the advice of elders and attend to your business. Avoid dubious love adventures. Take extra care of your health and that of the elders in the family. **Good dates:** 9, 11 and 13. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 8. **Favourable directions:** South-west and North-east.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) Refrain from making impulsive changes. Guard yourself against quarrels, especially in love and domestic affairs. Exercise tact, prudence and circumspection in dealings with the opposite sex. A secret matter will progress well, but do not be deceived by the magnitude of initial success. Safeguard the health of your self and that of your children. **Good dates:** 14, 15 and 17. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 4 and 8. **Favourable direction:** North.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) You will enjoy financial benefits provided your activities are inspired by good motives. Secret desires and ambitions will be now realised and happiness will be all yours. Watch your expenditure. A good week for intellectual and business affairs. Family and social activities are well signified. Follow your own intuition. Love affairs are predicted for most. **Good dates:** 9, 10, 12 and 13. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



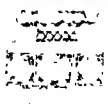
SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) A week of mixed fortunes is predicted for you. You will enjoy a sense of well-being and contentment despite some financial disappointment. Intellectual company will prove helpful. Do not enter into arguments and check over-enthusiasm. Push your affairs to the utmost. Make changes if you like and go on a journey. Some misfortune may befall you at the weekend. **Good dates:** 6, 10 and 13. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 6 and 10. **Favourable directions:** South.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) This week will be active and generally successful. Think twice before investing money in shipping and transport business. Your affairs will prosper well. Unexpected benefits, perhaps through a female, are likely. Make timely changes. A good time for travel. Attend to your health and that of your family. You should postpone courtship and marriage. **Good dates:** 8, 9 and 12. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 2 and 7. **Favourable direction:** West.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) This week will be difficult and trying for you. Your health and that of your womenfolk may cause anxiety. Tone up your nerves and take extra care in diet. You may be faced with some kind of trouble and loss in the first three days of the week. Guard against deception in love and romance. Later, your own initiative will greatly help you. **Good dates:** 11, 12, 13 and 14. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South.



AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) Do not fritter away all your gains. Let not your heart over-rule your common sense. You will be happy and fortunate this week. Intellectual activities are well signified. Act upon your own intuitions. Make hay while the sun shines. Exercise prudence where legal matters are concerned. Do not be deceived by new friends. **Good dates:** 9, 10 and 12. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 7 and 10. **Favourable directions:** East and North-east.



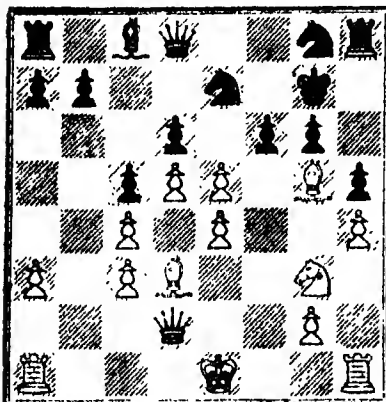
PISCES (February 20 — March 20) A mixed grill is your portion this week. Favourable and unfavourable influences operate this week. Gambling may prove profitable. Beware of accidents. Do not neglect your health. Exercise circumspection in all affairs. Plans for marriage should be postponed. You will spend a happy weekend. **Good dates:** 8, 12 and 14. **Lucky numbers:** 7, 4 and 1. **Favourable direction:** South-East.

M. B. RAMAN

chess



Lein (Black) to move



Szabo (White)

Position after White's 16th move

Game of the month - à la Nimzovitch
Blockade and destroy. This was the strategy used with such great effect by Aaron Nimzovitch, founder and author of the most popular queenside defence of today, the Nimzo-Indian. The following game gives a truly classic illustration of his method and can be taken as an almost perfect model. The player of the black pieces is Anatoly Lein, another of the ex-Soviet school who has flourished in the West since his emigration some three years ago.

White L Szabo Black A Lein
Vrsac 1979 Nimzo-Indian Defence
1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-K3; 3. N-QB3, B-N5; 4. P-K3, P-B4; 5. P-QR3, BxN+6. PxN, N-B3; 7. N-K2. The alternative set-up is 7 B-Q3 and 8 N-K2
7... P-Q3; 8. N-N3, P-K4; 9. P-Q5, N-K2; 10. B-Q3, P-KR4! Pure Nimzovitch. It instead 10 O-O, 11 O-O White has the very strong attacking plan P-B4-B5 and P-K4, but Black's pawn thrust completely undermines this idea.
11. P-KR4 Necessary, else P-R5 is too strong, but now White can never advance P-KB4 without leaving a hole on KN4.
11... P-KN3; 12. P-K4, K-B1! The next phase is to build an impenetrable fortress on the kingside.

13. B-N5, K-N2; 14. O-Q2, N(B3)-N1! Preparing P-B3 and N-R3-B2 with an unbreakable defence. Having consolidated Black could then look to White's pawn weaknesses, but Szabo is not prepared to give him the time—

15. P-B4! P-B3; 16. PxP! (DIAGRAM). For if 16... PxP 17 QxP White has a raging attack.

18... QPxP! 17. O-O, Q-Q3; 18. R-B2! Continuing to offer the piece if 18... PxP 19. QR-KB1 with a terrible check on B7 coming.

18... B-Q2; 19. QR-KB1, R-KB1; 20. B-K2 White has run up against a brick wall - there's no way through.

20... B-K1; 21. N-R1, R-B2; 22. B-Q1! R-R2; 22... PxP 23 B-R4!! is still too dangerous. Black has no need to take risks because in the long term he can always push his opponent back.

23. B-K3, P-QN3; 24. P-N4, PxP; 25. BxP, B-Q2; 26. R-N2, Rxp; 27. B-B5, K-B1! Not 27... P-KN4? 28 BxP! 28. BxP, NxP; 29. RxN, R(2)-R2; 30. N-N3, K-B2; 31. R-N5, N-R3; 32.

R-R5, RxR; 33. NxR, N-N5; 34. NxP A last try. If 34... N-N3, R-R5 Black soon obtains an overwhelming attack.
34... NxN; 35. B-N5, R-N2! 36. K-R2, R-N3; 37. BxN, RxB; 38. Q-R6 Hoping for 38... R-B7+? 39. RxR Check.
38... B-K1; 39. R-B5, K-K2; 40. Q-N5, B-N3! Forcing White into a fatal pin.
41. RxP+ K-B2; 42. K-N2, BxP+! Resigns. If 43. RxB, R-N3.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge



CAN six international players—not to mention the *Bulletin* editor—all have the same blind spot? Apparently they can, if you look at this deal from the round robin stage of the recent world championship.

Dealer, South. E-W vulnerable

♠ 9 5 4
♥ Q 10 7 4
♦ A Q 10 9 4
♣ 5

♠ A K J 10
♥ K 6 5
♦ K 7 5 3
♣ 10 6

N E
S
♠ 6 3 2
♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ 8 2
♣ J 8 4 3

♠ Q 8 7
♥ A J
♦ J 6
♣ A K Q 9 7 2

The contract at all six tables—there were three matches in progress—was 3NT by South. In every case West opened a high spade and switched to a diamond.

Two declarers went up with ♦ A and took the heart finesse. Borin, for Australia, found the good defence of cashing ♦ K and exiting with a heart, leaving South with no chance. The other declarer who followed this line succeeded because of a defensive error.

Belladonna let the diamond at trick two run to his Jack and cashed the top clubs. When they failed to break, he finessed ♦ 9, cashed the Ace, and exited with a diamond. West cleared this spades and the declarer was a trick short. Maduro, for Central America, began the same way but made the contract because the defence was mistimed.

Cummings, for Australia, won the second trick with ♦ 9 and followed with Ace and Jack of hearts. When West ducked, he cashed the top clubs, took two diamonds and exited with a heart, forcing West to give him his ninth trick with the Queen of spades. The declarer's play was likely to win only if West held both red Kings.

The mysterious thing about all this is that once declarer has put in ♦ 9 at trick two, which certainly is better than letting it run to the Jack, all he need do is make an elementary avoidance play in clubs. He just puts in the 9 and, unless clubs are 5-1, he is now assured of five clubs, three diamonds and one heart.

The new series of Faber Paperback Bridge includes some old favourites and a new one, *Streamline Your Bidding*, by Victor Mollo (£2.95); 1,100 quizzes sounds at first a somewhat indigestible assortment, but it is so well done that the reader cannot fail to improve his knowledge and judgement.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



The Netherlands was one of the first European countries to make a regular practice of issuing commemorative stamps. A series in 1906 marked the 300th anniversary of the birth of the renowned Dutch admiral De Ruyter and in 1913 a series of 12 celebrated the centenary of the modern Dutch kingdom. These designs portrayed the Dutch monarchs who had ruled since independence. The silver jubilee of Queen Wilhelmina's accession was marked in 1923 by 11 large stamps bearing her portrait. On the low values she was in profile but the three high values showed her in lonely regal splendour on her throne. This mint example of the 2 1/2 guilder stamp was valued at £50 in a recent Phillips auction. The stamps of the Netherlands and of the Dutch colonies before independence are listed and priced with those of Belgium and Luxembourg in the new Stanley Gibbons 'Benelux' catalogue (214 pp., £6).

C. W. HILL

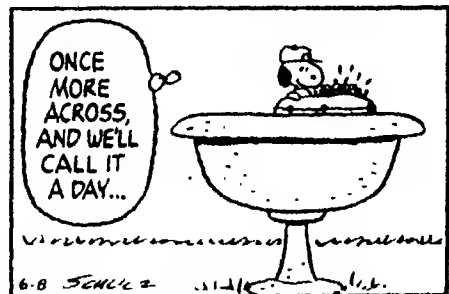
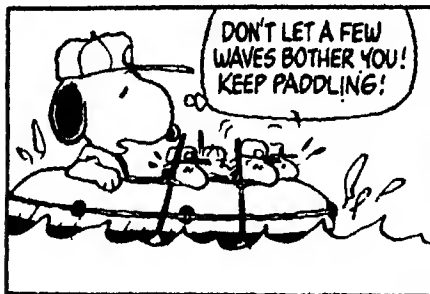
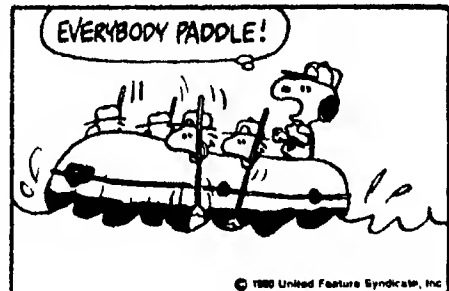
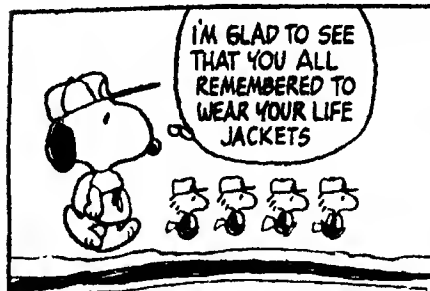
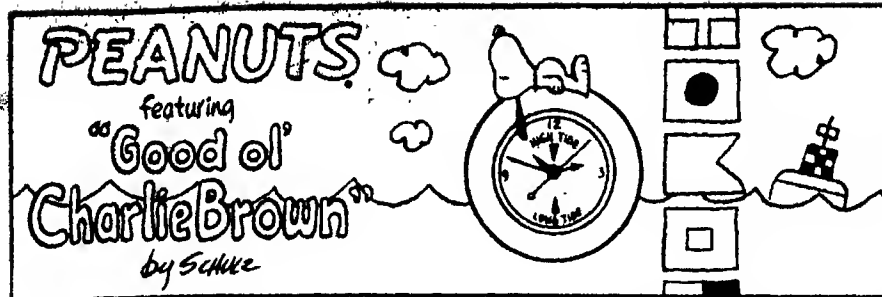
QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What is ethnohistory?
2. What is oracy?
3. What is the Spearman foot-rule?
4. What is psychography?
5. Who is the director of the film 'Domicile Conjugal' (Bed and board)?
6. What is a counterpoint in music?
7. Who composed the *Symphonie Fantastique*?
8. What does the phrase 'mutatis mutandis' mean?
9. What is the Choriolus nigriceps?
10. What is a young eel called?

10. An eel.
9. The Great Indian Bustard.
8. With necessary changes.
7. Hector Berlioz.
6. The combination of two or more melodies played simultaneously.
5. Francois Truffaut.
4. A jargon term referring to the importance of an author's like in a work of art.
3. It is a shortcut method of calculating correlation coefficient due to Spearman.
2. Mastery of the skills of listening and speaking.
1. The history of non-literate people.

ANSWERS



RANBAXY'S GARLIC PEARLS

A few facts you should know.

Garlic has been well-known from earliest times for its medicinal properties. Medical authorities have accepted the value of garlic in correcting various health problems. Garlic can be taken raw or cooked or in capsule form. But to derive the maximum medicinal benefits from garlic, it should be taken in the most effective way.

Why not raw Garlic?



Raw garlic cloves have to be chewed before the extract acts inside the body. But when chewed, they leave an unpleasant smell. When swallowed, they are difficult to digest. And the extraction is incomplete.



Why not
cooked
Garlic?

On cooking, the effective medicinal properties of garlic are lost.

Why RANBAXY'S GARLIC PEARLS?

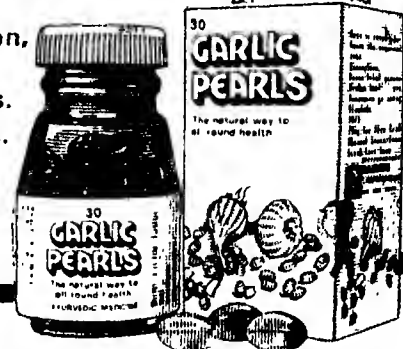
Ranbaxy Laboratories, a trusted name with the medical profession, now gives you all the benefits of raw garlic—without the smell. Ranbaxy's Garlic Pearls contain the pure extract of raw garlic in easy-to-digest, soft gelatin capsules—the most effective way of deriving the medicinal properties of garlic.

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regularly.

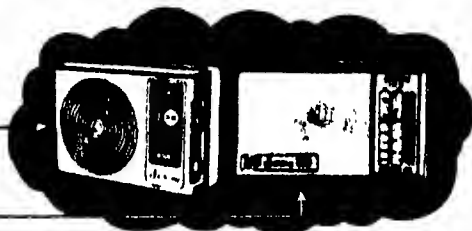


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mangharam & sons

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makers of "Crisp, crunchy biscuits
and yum yum cream wafers"

M & T



BANGALORE: Alleged excessive consumption of alcohol combined with a big appetite for jackfruit landed a district judge in trouble. An express bus from Chitradurga to Bangalore was converted into a shuttle as the 'spirited' judge conveyed his orders through his personal assistant for the driver to stop the bus at every roadside jackfruit stall. The judge's unreasonable pleas in matching language infuriated the other passengers who got into a heated argument. Swear words were freely exchanged and it seems the passengers were threatened with dire consequences. As the bus entered Bangalore, the quarrel also hit the peak and the passengers demanded the bus be taken to Malleswaram police station. By then it was 7.30 in the evening. In the station a new drama unfolded as the judge and his assistant charged the passengers with calling the latter an untouchable. (The assistant is a Harijan). A complaint was lodged against the passengers. The passengers and the bus conductor lodged a complaint of criminal intimidation and drunken and disorderly behaviour. The judge was taken to a doctor who examined him. Finally the police decided to arrest the judge. But this gave rise to further complications as the judge raised several objections. Finally he agreed to get released after signing a bail and surety bond. Then he left for his house along with the jackfruits bought on the way.—*The Indian Express* (K. B. Madhuvaraj, Bangalore)

CALCUTTA: Mr Bajrang Sharma (24) came all the way from Kanpur to Calcutta to offer his tongue to goddess Kali. On May 15, at about 7 p.m. after taking a dip in the holy Ganges, he went to the Kalighat temple and with the help of a razor cut off half his tongue and offered it to the goddess. According to the police, before cutting off his tongue, he had said to the people present in the temple that the leaders of the country were giving sermons about many things almost but none was interested in improving the lots of the common man like him. What was the need for keeping the tongue which did not say

anything? Then suddenly, he cut off his tongue and offered it to the goddess Kali. It was his belief that Mother Kali would take care of the people whom the leaders were ignoring.—*The Hindustan Standard* (Rajneesh Goel, Calcutta)

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI: Permission to copy in the examination as a matter of right was demanded by a section of the students appearing for the degree examination (semester) at the Government Arts College at Karur, 75 km from Tiruchirappalli on Wednesday. They also wanted to be given the addresses of the examiners.—*The Times of India* (M. V. Ramna Murty, Secunderabad)

KANPUR: Written outside on the walls of the Regional Employment Office here in glaring red is: "Wanted 425 candidates to fill the seats of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha. Qualification: even those who can put their thumb impressions for signatures will do. Priority will be given to candidates adept in destructibility and having a notorious record." This about sums up the general dissatisfaction that people of this industrial city have of late developed towards elections and politicians.—*The Indian Express* (S. K. Mohapatra, Kanpur)

HOSKOTE: The Weights and Measurements Department, which was here recently for the annual check-up of weights and measures, are said to have taken the "measures" along with them while leaving. As a result, work in many establishments like the Agro Kendra and the TAPCMS has come to standstill.—*The Deccan Herald* (T. S. Murti, Bangalore)

DELHI: Railway officials were taken by surprise when they discovered a mare travelling ticketless in a second class coach of the Nangal-Express which arrived at Delhi Main on Saturday (April 17) morning. The mare belongs to Puran Singh, 42 a Nihang Sikh of Sursingh village, Amritsar, also travelling ticketless. He pleaded not guilty because the Nihangs or "Guru Ka Piaras", had divine sanction to travel free. However, the bemused special railway magistrate, before whom they were produced, disagreed. He ordered Puran Singh to pay Rs 678 towards the cost of the ticketless travel for himself and the mare. He had no money to pay the fare. The alternative was simple imprisonment for 30 days. Puran Singh was assured that the mare would be well looked after at the MCD cattle pond during their separation. Obviously, none of the passengers had dared raise any objection during the journey from Fatehgarh Sahib where the two had boarded the train at midnight.—*The Times of India* (Pratima, New Delhi)

THIS is a time of the year when normally prices go up—Mrs Indira Gandhi's comment on inflation

MR PAWAR is a good leader but Mrs Gandhi is a greater leader. Mr Pawar is all right but only Indiraji can do something—A vendor from Baramati in Maharashtra quoted in *The Statesman*

MOST Ministers and administrators have to look over their shoulders to ensure that they are in step with Sanjay's wishes as well as his mother's—S. Nihal Singh in *India Today*

THE difference between Mrs Gandhi and me is that she is with Jawaharlal by accident, I am with him by choice—H. N. Bahuguna after quitting the Congress (I)

THE Garcha case was not an isolated incident. It was part of a culture — L. K. Advani, former Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting

I AM a very limited politician. My politics is confined to my constituency—Kamal Nath, Congress (I) MP quoted in *Weekend Review*

WE may have second thoughts (about not dislodging the Left Front government in West Bengal) if the killings continue and the power situation shows no sign of improvement—A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury, Union Power Minister

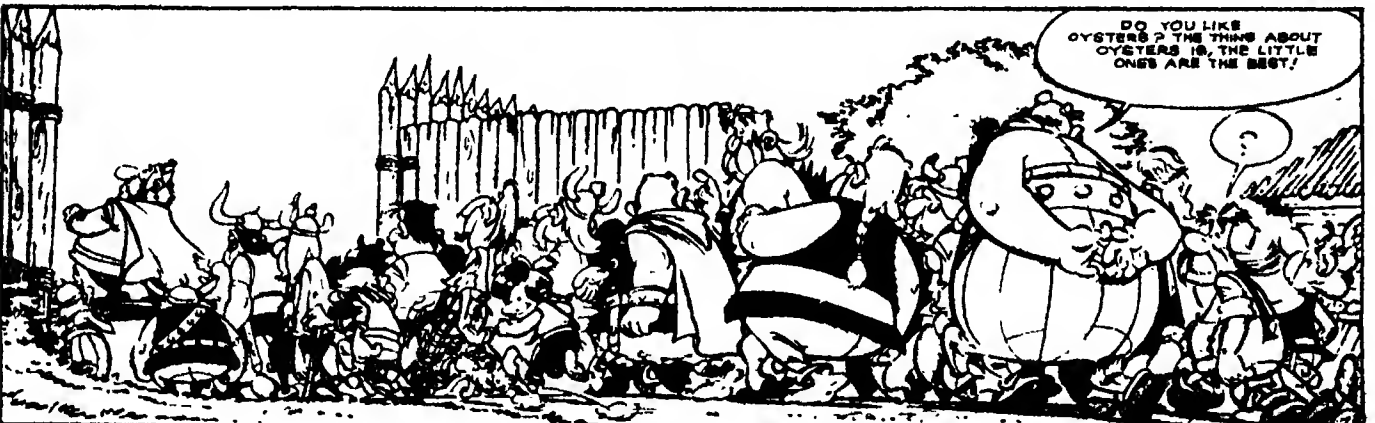
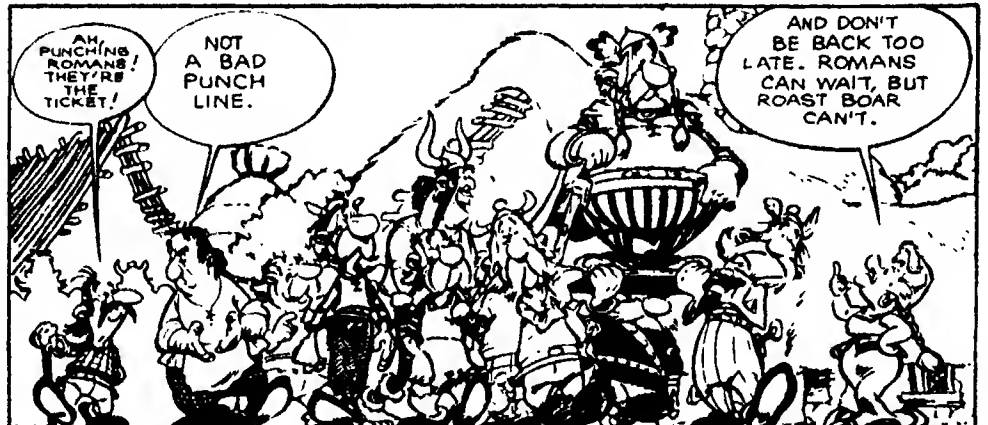
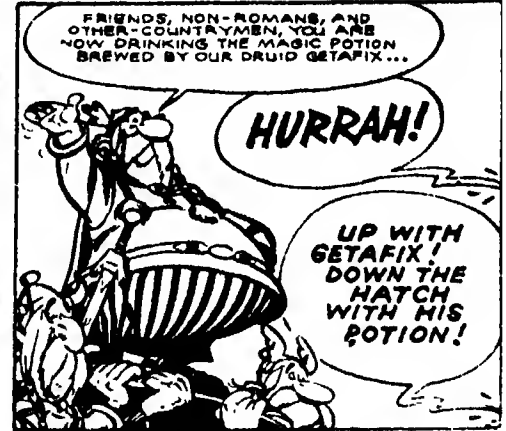
WE donot think that the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister of West Bengal have the monopoly to speak on the unity of the country...The Assamese are as good as others—D P. Borooah of the All Assam Students' Union

A SOVIET journalist is by definition an agent of political intelligence whether he works directly for the KGB or not—Ila Grigorievich, former KGB agent who defected to Britain

THE Games (Moscow Olympics) will not be worthy of the name Olympic. The medals will be of inferior worth — Mrs Thatcher.

I THINK that woman (Margaret Thatcher) should stop hectoring and bullying athletes. She should get off our backs—Derek Johnson, chairman of International Athletes Club

I AM not for women's liberation as it is generally seen all over the world. I think that is a reasonable movement for fashion magazines —Mrinal Sen, noted film director



[illegible]

A cartoon panel showing a man in a suit running away from a machine labeled "CHATTER CHATTER". The man is looking back over his shoulder with a worried expression. A speech bubble from him says, "OH NO, BY JUPITER! THIS IS TOO MUCH!". The machine is a boxy, mechanical device with a circular dial and a small figure inside. The background is simple, with some lines suggesting a room or hallway.

CHATTER
CHATTER

LISTEN, WILL YOU?
YOU'RE FREE!
YOU CAN GO!

AFTER
MY
SIESTA.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, AFTER YOUR SIESTA?

IT'S GETTING LATE, ROMAN. IF I DON'T HAVE MY SIESTA NOW, I SHAN'T HAVE TO HAVE IT BEFORE BEDTIME, SO LEAVE ME ALONE OR I MIGHT LOSE MY TEMPER.

LOOK, ARE YOU OR ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ESCAPE?!

THEY'RE COMING, CENTURION HIPPOPOTAMUS, AND THEY'VE GOT SOME FRIENDS WITH THEM. WE WOULDN'T LIKE YOU TO MISS THE START.

THEY'RE
COMING, CENTURION
HIPPOPOTAMUS, AND
THEY'VE GOT SOME FRIENDS
WITH THEM. WE
WOULDN'T LIKE YOU TO
MISS THE START.

WRONG ANSWERS

THE irrepressible Union Minister for Works and Housing, Prakash Chandra Sethi, was recently in Chandigarh, the Union Territory which is shared by both Punjab and Haryana as state capital. The minister was delayed in the morning because his car had lined up outside a petrol pump and there was a long queue. Sethi was surprised that petrol had become such a "big problem these days". The reference obviously was to the days—till a few months ago—when he had held charge of the Petroleum portfolio. He then engaged some newsmen in a talk regarding the present working of the agencies which deal with petrol distribution. But the newsmen wanted him to say something on the Works and Housing Ministry instead. "Housing is a state subject," Sethi told them. "But Chandigarh is not a state and Union Territories come under the Centre's charge," one newsman persisted. But Sethi was adamant. He wanted the newsman to direct his query at the Governor. When it was pointed out that Chandigarh had no Governor or Lieutenant Governor but a Chief Commissioner, an angry Sethi told the newsman to keep his facts to himself and approach the Commissioner instead. Earlier Sethi had expressed his displeasure at the way in which the Congress (I) tickets had been distributed in Madhya Pradesh. "Arun Singh was not on my list," he complained.

UNACCOMPANIED

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU's 16th death anniversary was observed by the Nehru Memorial Trust on May 27 with a dawn prayer meeting at his samadhi, Shantivana. Mrs Gandhi reached the samadhi at 5.53 am sharp, accompanied by Rajiv Gandhi and his two children, Rahul and Priyanka, and placed red roses on her father's tomb. But why did no office bearer of either of the Congress Parties—"I" and "U" go to pay homage to that great leader? No office bearer of either the AICC(I) or the Youth Congress (I) was present. Only three ministers, P. C. Sethi, P. V. Narasimha Rao and Shiv Shanker were with Mrs Gandhi at that early hour to pay homage to Nehru. Rao Birendra Singh arrived when the prayers were halfway through. Along with Mrs Gandhi were Yashpal Kapoor, Mohd. Yunus, R. K. Dhawan and S. Y. Sharada Prasad.

MIGRANT MINISTER



Pranab Mukherjee

MOST members of the Congress(I) Cabinet are plagued by a sense of insecurity. There are some like Zail Singh and J. B. Patnaik who are worried that they may have to return to their respective states. But unlike these two, there is something else worrying Union Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee: his term as a member of the Rajya Sabha expires on April 1 1981. What will he do after that? He is aware that he got into the Cabinet by virtue of his loyalty to the Gandhis. He also realises that he does not stand a chance of making it to the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal, so he has bought some land in Gujarat and has got himself included on the Gujarat voters' list. In 1981 he intends to get into the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat.

TEMPORARY ABSENCE

MANEKA GANDHI's name is back as the editor of *Surya* in its June issue after having been missing in May. The absence of her name last month prompted many, including this columnist to write a farewell piece on her departure from journalism. But she has not left after all. Why then was her name withdrawn from the May issue? Interestingly, the May issue carried an "Interview" with the convicted international criminal, Charles Sobhraj.

SOME SIMILE !

REMEMBER the Communist Party leader from Bihar, Yogendra Sharma, MP, whose script of the election telecast from Muzaffarpur was subject to scrutiny by the Doordarshan authorities, because he referred to a "growing impression" that Sanjay Gandhi was being "groomed" as a successor to Mrs Gandhi? Now he is reported to have told the embarrassed Doordarshan authorities that by deleting references to Sanjay Gandhi from his script they were behaving like orthodox Hindu women who are ashamed of referring to their husbands by name. An interesting part of the deliberations between him and the Doordarshan authorities was that the latter preferred the term "caucus" to a reference to Sanjay Gandhi and made Sharma replace a reference to the Zia regime in Pakistan. While Sharma wanted to refer to it as a "hated regime", Doordarshan wanted the reference to be to "the military dictatorship". According to Sharma, the Doordarshan people seemed to have some *ghrina* (hatred) for the term *ghrinit* (hated).

SOME MORE EQUAL

THIS is not a reflection on the independence of the judiciary, but the court clerks of Delhi's Patiala House courts seem to be treating one litigant slightly differently from the rest. The cause list displayed outside the metropolitan magistrate K. C. Lohia's court on the morning of May 20 referred to only one person with the prefix of "Shri". The rest of the litigants were not accorded that honour, nor is it a normal court practice to refer to anyone as 'Shri' so-and-so in the cause list. The following is an extract from the cause list of May 20, which lists items number 7 to 10 under the head "Appearances":

7. Union of India vs Pratap Singh
8. State vs Vichattar Mohan, etc.
9. Shri Sanjay Gandhi vs Rakesh Khorwal
10. State vs Wazir Chand.

A WOMAN'S TOUCH

NOT only has the Lok Dal acquired the "woman" symbol from the Election Commission, it has also hired a lady telephone operator for its central office at Windsor Place. If you dial the Lok Dal number, an English-speaking voice responds.

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

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value taste.*



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You save Rs. 278 every year on fuel bills with a Hawkins® pressure cooker

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Solve your kerosene problem

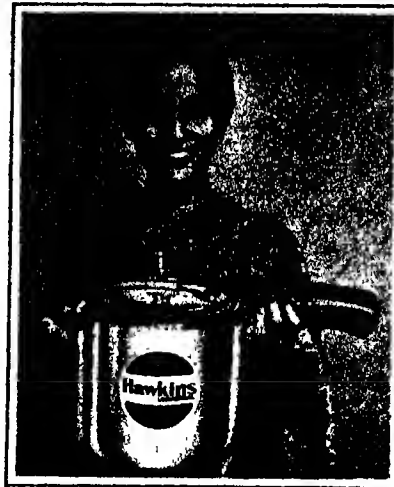
Kerosene is difficult to get and costs a lot. Therefore, every effort must be made to use the minimum kerosene for cooking. Modern science has a solution.

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Hawkins gives the least trouble. The Hawkins gasket and safety valve last longer than in ordinary pressure cookers.

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In a detailed on-the-spot coverage on Assam, a team of reporters investigates why people are dying, who are the brains behind the movement, what are the chances of a solution and what dangers the agitation portends for the security of the country. Seventeen pages of exclusive reports and pictures. **Page 6**



The Congress (I) and Mrs Gandhi are once again burdened by power with the Party winning eight of the nine state Assembly elections. PRAN CHOPRA analyses the voting pattern, and assesses the meaning of the Congress (I)'s defeat in Tamil Nadu. **Page 32**

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What are Assam's politicians doing now?
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Cover transparency by Raghu Rai

Editor M J Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Anvya Bhattacharya

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Save the Stars

LAST year it was Kalpana, the tragedy queen of the Kannada cinema and this year it is Shoba. It is a severe blow to the people who loved her so dearly. If Shoba had waited at least one more year she would have realised her ambitions. But her tension-ridden life made it suffocating for her to live any longer. These days such incidents seem to be quite common in film industry. As far as the love affairs of the stars are concerned, the Press should treat them tenderly for it is they who can save the stars ultimately.
P. S. Rao, Bangalore.

FROM the cover story it is crystal clear that Shoba had risen due to Balu Mahendra. Premma, Shoba's mother, was a small-time actress and wished her daughter remained with her always to continue laying the golden eggs. Premma was more interested in the money than in her daughter's life. It is needless to say that the selfish mother stood as an obstacle in the love affair of her daughter with Balu. When Shoba did get married secretly Premma ridiculed her and society looked on her as a sinner. The insult was too great and she ended her life. I feel that society should be held responsible for Shoba's death.
K. Vajreshwar, Bombay.

THIS has reference to your cover story on the tragic death of Shoba. As a film scribe I knew her as a simple lass with simple desires. She acted with zest and possessed an unending zeal to live life to the full, to crown herself with glory and fame. Pampered, yet unspoilt, Shoba was a great actress who never put on any airs. Her tragic end is a pointer to scores of filmstars who yearn for

domestic bliss, but find to their dismay that they have put their foot in the wrong place. As the curtain falls on the enquiries engineered to probe her death one cannot but remember with grief the little spirit whom God has beckoned at at such a tender age.
C. V. Aravind, Madras.

MANY thanks to you for the superb articles on the death of Shoba. I have been through them time and again but feel compelled to continue leafing through the pages. It is beyond my capability to express my true feelings about the excellent coverage by your magazine.
Minati Das, Calcutta.

THAT a budding actress like Shoba should die so young is too much for me to bear. The genius of the great artiste was yet to flower. Had she lived longer she could have risen to greater heights. The cover story writers deserve praise for a well-written piece. May the soul of the great artiste rest in peace.
Radha Raman Mishra, Gaya.

THE cover story brought out the events and incidents that led to Shoba's suicide or death. We thank you for the detailed story, cover story and the exclusive interview with Balu Mahendra. Your write-up rather intensifies our grief. The headlines in the Tamil newspapers are nothing but a hoax and it is only to lure the public. We can understand her much better now as an ardent lover and an intellectual actress. By publishing those beautiful photographs of Shoba you have made her live in the hearts of millions of her fans. Hats off to SUNDAY.
R. Bhaskaran and R. Ranjani, Tiruchirappalli.

WHILE words are completely useless at such a time I feel I must write to tell you of my sincere and deep horror at the tragic death. She really had a fund of talent.
J. S. Acharya, Hyderabad.

THE account given by Arthur Pais and Tooshar Pandit on Shoba's death is distorted and one-sided. How can society be responsible for her death? Further, the writers have all the sympathy for a man who entered the family as a godfather and finally snatched away the breadwinner of the family.
K. Sathianathan, Coimbatore.

THE loss of a really talented artiste like Shoba is irreparable. But, her suicide was the only way out of the terrible loneliness and the inhuman treatment that she had to face all along. Her despair thrashed her dream of heaven in the union of true love.
V. G. Vijaykumar, Calcutta.

WHETHER it was a case of murder or suicide, the death of Shoba, is a thing of sorrow to one and all. No more will we see the talent of the promising young star who was the recipient of the Urvashi award. Balu Mahendra cannot be absolved of his moral responsibility for the tragedy. Besides, Hindu law does not permit a married man to take a second wife as this comes under the Bigamy Act. However, it is sad to note that this sort of thing has become a regular feature of filmdom in this country. One wonders how such people manage to escape from the clutches of the law. Balu's graduation, the gold medal he won at the Film Institute and all the fame he earned for himself in South India have been overshadowed by the news of this tragedy involving his moral turpitude. One could well draw the inference, "Immorality, thy name is cinema". It would be a good thing if young unmarried heroines would draw a lesson from this great tragedy.
A. V. S. D. S. Chaimu, Pithapuram.

I HAVE seen photographs of Shoba on many occasions, but never have I seen one so beautiful as the one of the late star that adorned the cover of your magazine.
B. A. Vadhood, Mettupalayam.

ONE cannot but sigh in deep sorrow and anguish after reading "Why Shoba committed suicide" by Arthur Pais and Tooshar Pandit (May 11). The tragedy happened as a result of her lamentable error of judgment and gullibility coupled with the lust, lechery and perversion of an elderly man, the uncle-turned-husband. Balu Mahendra left her on the last night of her life to spend with his other wife. This was unbearable to her and she decided to take her own life. The tragedy, too deep for tears, may be ascribed not so much to the social values as to the individual moral aberrations.
N. N. Sen, Calcutta.

IT is clear from the cover story that on the morning of May 1 Shoba was dead. But towards the end of the article we are given a detailed account of what she did on the morning of May 1. Isn't this contradictory?
Debjani Acharya, Burdwan.

BALU Mahendra's words describing his love for Shoba are not new. Balu had exploited the sentiments of an adolescent girl who had never quite realised the true nature of the relationship between a father and daughter, or a niece and uncle. It was Balu who taught her only the sexual aspect of a man-woman relationship. Indeed, Shoba was most unfortunate, for she sacrificed her short life in order to satisfy the money and sex hunger of her family and Balu.
Satish Chandra Thwari, Allahabad.

THE pathos that the writers have tried to build into Shoba's suicide story is false and artificial. Shoba's affair with Balu Mahendra in Madras and Vinod Mehra's with Bindya Gowami in Bombay symbolise the deep malaise to highlight the duality of Indian society. Our film industry today has turned into an overtly rich wellfed bunch of dim wits constantly enacting dramas with pre-puberty nymphs.

H. L. Aly, Hyderabad.

"BALU : His love story" was simply fantastic. After going through the article one can get an idea of the mentality of the people of our country. It's a pity that people take marriage solely as a means of sexual pleasure. Many talented people as a result have to sacrifice their lives be-

cause of this lopsided view. But can Shoba's sacrificial act change our thoughts and attitudes?
Abhishek Bose, Ranchi.

A close study of Balu's love story reveals the utter selfishness of men in their dealings with women in general. As a mature person Balu should have realised the consequences of his affair with Shoba. It is Balu's selfish lust that is responsible for Shoba's loss of parental love and ultimately her death.

V. Viswanatham, Kovvur.

THE views of the writers of the article are absolutely right. The story provides a fabulous case history to the students of psychology.
N. Seshadri, Tiruchirappalli.

I DO agree with M. J. Akbar on one point. The article simply refers to Orissa as the only case in point but let me tell you that it can be applied to the entire Indian political situation.
Subhas Chandra Panigrahi, Orissa.

Photogenic, what?

MR A. S. Raman is an angry man and in his anger he has killed the sense of decency. He says that Khushwant Singh is known to be allergic to facts and figures and further states that he photographs better than his predecessor. More laughable is his claim that Khushwant Singh is a hack.
R. K. Gulati, Siliguri.

Mr S. N. Dasgupta as the Superintendent of Excise police posted at Jaipur. In fact, the late S. N. Dasgupta was Collector of Central Excise and Customs, Jaipur.
C. Varadarajan, Calcutta.

"THE Mafia's brutal politics" was quite shocking. There are two glaring errors in the article. It has been mentioned that Kamdeo's men are also responsible for the murder of S. N. Dasgupta, the Superintendent of Excise Police posted at Jaipur. But my husband was the Collector of Customs and Central Excise, Jaipur and not Superintendent of Excise Police. Secondly, it has been said that Mr Dasgupta got himself transferred as he heard that his life was in danger. This is not at all true. He was transferred by the then Central Minister of State for Finance.
Arati Dasgupta, Calcutta.

ONE thing which your article did not make clear was whether Kamdeo Singh and his gang operated underground all through.
Snehalata Ray, Puri (Orissa).

YOUR article has given this diehard criminal the status of Robin Hood. If the gory deeds of such dacoits are upheld in glorified terms then wouldn't it be taken as an encouragement? The politicians of this country should be freed from the clutch of the anti-socials.
A. K. A. C. Chakraborty, Bombay.

Ringside view

SUBIR ROY in his "Manipur attacks outsiders" (SUNDAY, May 11) reveals the atrocities committed by the Manipuri youths on the minorities. The bizarre point is that the government machinery chose to be content with only a ringside view and did nothing whatsoever to prevent the lynching mob.

Rajesh C. Sinha and Pradip, Durgapur.

SUBIR ROY's on-the-spot report on Manipur is timely, bold and thought-provoking. Manipur is in the grip of violence and tension. It is high time the Centre should come forward and take a quick step to restore peace and stability in the region.
A. K. Ghatak, Kakrajhar, Assam.

Brave and great

I HAVE been reading SUNDAY with great interest and I find that the editor of this esteemed magazine is brave enough to publish such serious articles. But it is a pity that the magazine is not regular.
Somanath Khuntia, Puri.

Long live the Free Press

I do not know what made you conclude that Shoba was a Christian and hence she had to be buried. This story was spawned by some irresponsible local journalists just to give the impression that Balu wanted to do away with Shoba's body as soon as possible. Shoba was certainly not a Christian: often she worshipped at Velankanni church but then she also frequented several temples and Muslim shrines too. Her parents were not Christians either. Funeral arrangements were made entirely by her parents and while they did so, Balu was not allowed to go anywhere near her body as long as it remained in their house. Some English journalists also brought this story of Shoba being a Christian from Tamil papers without any verification and I am truly sorry that you had to incorporate it in my article.

Incidentally, forensic experts and handwriting specialists have established that the suicide note left by Shoba was written by her, setting at rest the controversy that it was faked. The post-mortem examination did not reveal any internal or external injury and inspection of the room, where the death occurred, showed that there was no exit other than the door which Shoba had bolted and which was broken open by Shoba's father and Balu, after an hour-long struggle, with the help of a grinding stone. And right now some of the more enterprising journalists are writing about the murder Balu is supposed to have committed in Sri Lanka. Long live the free Press.
Arthur Pais, Madras.

No credit

M. J. AKBAR has rightly pointed out the charisma and dynamism of Biju Patnaik in his Notes (May 11). Indeed Mr Patnaik is the father of modern Orissa. It is a pity that the leaders of the ruling Party are taking the credit for the large projects in Orissa which are actually the doings of Biju Patnaik.
Sagar Mohanty, Rourkela.

THE starting was fantastic. The raja and the barber story clearly tells us the state of affairs in Orissa. Not only Orissa, it talks about the entire Indian situation, in the first few lines.
Anirudha Dasgupta, Calcutta.

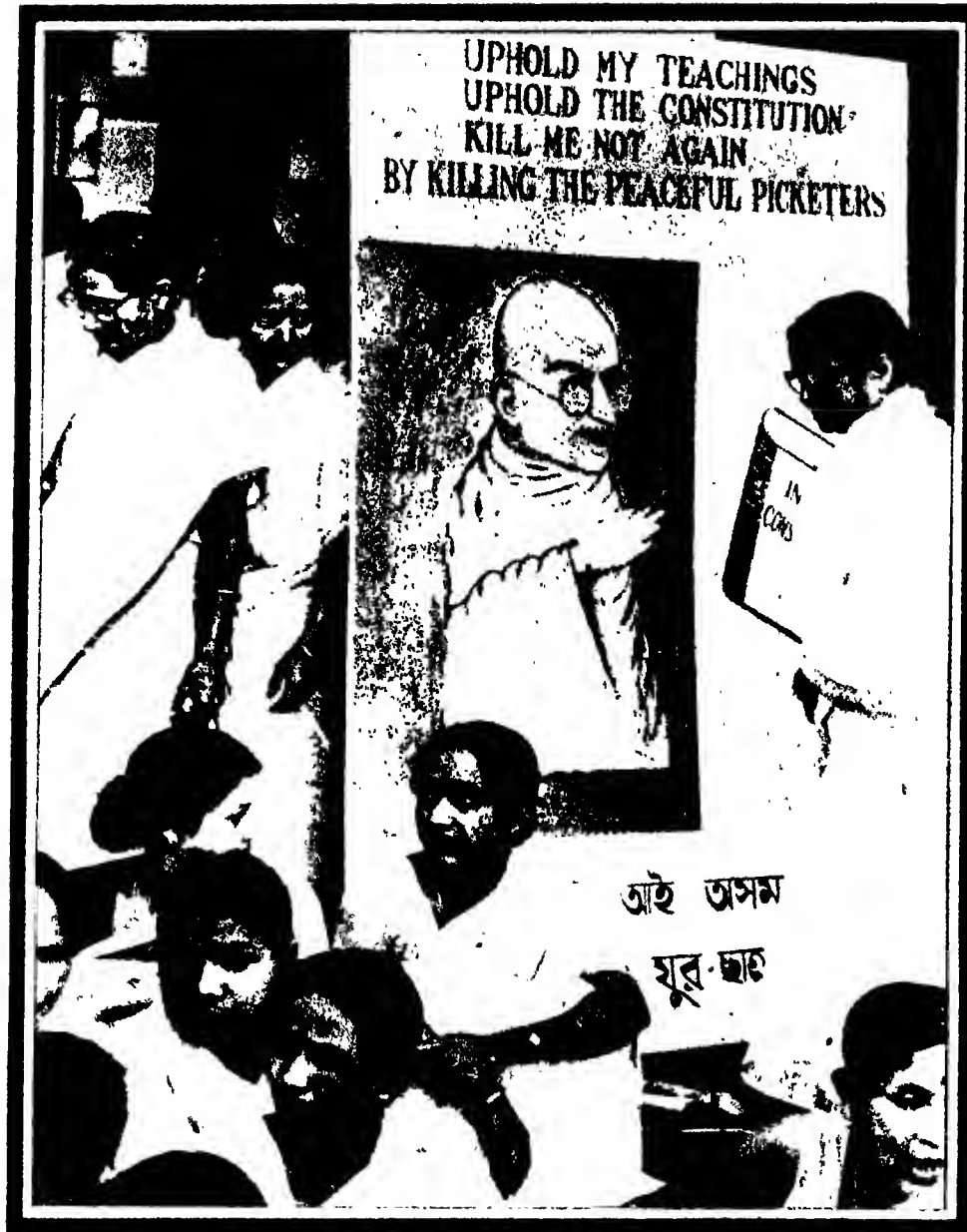
Ignorance

I do not agree with the statement that R. C. Khan was the only police officer who had the courage to oppose Kamdeo Singh (The saga of Kamdeo Singh, May 11, 1980). Our company, D/47 CRPF was at the disposal of Mr R. P. Verma, IPS, the SP of Begusarai for maintenance of law and order during the period 1978/79. During this period we carried out a number of operations under his supervision against Kamdeo Singh. He ignored all the threats and warnings of Kamdeo Singh's group, to the extent that he risked his life. Such loyal officers should not be ignored on occasions like this.
K. Premchand, Biharsharif.

THE articles in the feature "The saga of Kamdeo Singh" obviously glorify the character of the smuggler-dacoit leader in death. This is as good an example of unhealthy journalism as any I can think of. One should always discriminate between a human genius and evil genius. Evil genius should always be condemned, no matter what level of success it attains. The glamour of success should not blind us to the means adopted by this anti-social and anti-national villain.
Jai Agarwala, Jalpaiguri.

UNDER the subtitle "The mafia's brutal politics" in the feature on Kamdeo Singh, you have referred to

COVER STORY



ASSAM The tragedy unfolds

Why are people dying ? Can peace ever return ? Who is who, and why are some people playing dangerous games ? An in-depth study

Photographs by RAGHU RAI

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."
—Alice in Wonderland.

Mrs Gandhi's velvet glove and mailed fist

By TOOSHAR PANDIT

AS the monsoon intensified over the Brahmaputra valley early this month, bringing relief from a searing summer, the Assam agitation against 'foreigners' paused for breath after seven months of hysteric convulsions. Never had Gauhati looked so quiet and normal since the agitation began as the agitation leaders, chastened by the previous week's bloody communal clashes in which 52 persons died, decided to shift the emphasis to integration and amity. A rare peace succeeded the crippling nine-day non-cooperation movement which ended on May 29. Nothing much is happening since then. The picketing has virtually ceased; the offices are functioning normally. Even the daily statements flowing out of the offices of the movement leaders, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the Gana Sangram Parishad (GSP) are less strident. When the week-long amity campaign ended on June 5, many expected that the agitation leaders would again switch to passionate street demonstrations, slogan-shouting, picketings and non-cooperation. Indeed, the AASU and the GSP, after reviewing the situation at a joint meeting, decided to prolong the spell of relative calm. June 10 was to be observed as the 'students integration day' to be followed by a ten-day campaign to highlight the 'conspiracies against the movement'.

One reason for the relaxed atmosphere was that the anticipated crackdown by Delhi did not take place. Everyone in Assam was expecting the worst to happen after the elections to the State Assemblies. When it did not, the agitators, visibly weary after months of protracted and often feverish campaigns, secretly welcomed the release from the tension. Besides, they did not want to provide any further excuse for a crackdown. Thus, for both tactical and the practical reasons, the pause was perhaps inevitable. This pause led to some serious soul-searching. The dominant question now was: If the agitation could be turned off temporarily, why not struggle at long last onto the conference table?

There is an emerging consensus, especially among the powerful urban elite including some of the mentors of the movement, that since the basic objective of focusing Assam's agonies and fears has been adequately achieved, there is hardly any point in prolonging the agitation. Apart from this, there is a growing feeling that even if Mrs Gandhi concedes the demands for the deportation of all the foreigners, actual deportation will not only take years to complete but is also virtually impossible. A clear majority in the movement's think tank is reconciled to this. The current trend of thinking, therefore, is that the movement should not get

unnecessarily stuck over a demand that is hardly attainable. The consensus is for a concentration of energy on a negotiated settlement that will ensure both political and economic supremacy of the indigenous Assamese speaking people in the state even if a bulk of the immigrants has to be accommodated. When AASU says that it had not launched the movement just for the sake of it, the point it presumably wants to emphasise is that the issues can be settled by means other than agitation. And this

succinctly sums up the prevailing mood.

Many other things have contributed towards softening the tone and temper of the people. As the stalemate continues, the stiff, personal prices everybody has to pay for it is beginning to tell. The economy is in a shambles. Development is almost frozen. There is the tension and fear which is affecting the nerves. The state secretariat at Dispur receives numerous complaints every day about extortion and threats of physical





Mrs Gandhi in Gauhati, L. P. Singh in the background

violence against reluctant donors. At Dibrugarh, the nose of a middle-aged lady was chopped off when she refused to give a subscription. She died later. At Jorhat, section 144 of the CrPC had to be invoked to restrain people from collecting subscriptions. Vigilant squads are springing up all over the place with the sole motive of making hay while the sun shines. Obviously, the movement has produced its special brand of corruption. AASU has disowned such corruption, but can it remain wholly insulated from the aberrations of a movement it has launched but over which it is apparently losing control?

What has, however, shaken the agitation the most is the arrival of the All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU). For months the vast majority of the state's three million Muslims were lying low in fear, full of foreboding. Would they be uprooted again? After taming the virgin soil, would they be required to return to the refugee trail? With the local administration hostile, they could only bolt the door, keep nightly vigils and pray for another day's peace

after one day was over. Then came the green signal from Mrs Gandhi and under the active and open patronage of the state's Congress (I), the AAMSU was born. The ringing cry in the Muslim belts is: "They will have to kill us to deport us". At the stark message of recent violence in the districts of Nowgong, Darrang, Goalpara and parts of Kamrup is that in three and half of the seven districts in the Brahmaputra valley the purging of 'foreigners' will be preceded by a bloodbath, the like of which even the Partition had not seen.

And after the Muslims, the shrewd tactician in Mrs Gandhi has now turned to the tribals. It is now their turn to realise that the movement against the 'foreigners' is not in their interest either. There are 1.7 million tribals in Assam and a bulk of them had registered Assamese as their mother tongue both in the 1961 and 1971 census. Now they want to be counted as independent linguistic groups according to the dialects they actually speak. The main cause of their disenchantment with the move-

ment stems from one of AASU's demands that seeks to abolish the system of reservation of land exclusively for the tribals.

The other AASU demand that has upset the tribals is the call for Assamese as the medium of instruction in schools, and the withdrawal of government patronage from institutions which do not conform. Currently, there are divisions among the various tribal organisations into pro and anti-agitation groups, but no one has any illusions, that, helped by a nod from Delhi, the tribals will go the Muslim way. Already, eleven tribal organisations have united under the banner of All Assam Tribal Protection Action Committee (AATPAC) to resist what they claim is the "anti-tribal and Assamisation policy in Assam". Significantly, the APCC (I) President, Lolit Doley, who had played an active role in organising the convention of the minorities at Jalewar which produced the AAMSU, was also among the main speakers at a convention of the tribal organisations at Dhekajuli in Upper Assam where the AATPAC was conceived. And on June 5, a delegation of the AATPAC left Gauhati for New Delhi to meet Mrs Gandhi and presumably to tell her what she wanted to hear.

SUCCESSIVE language riots since 1960 have created such a wide gulf between the state's two million Bengali speaking Hindus and the indigenous Assamese speaking inhabitants that they now appear to have been permanently alienated from one another, hardly requiring any persuasion from Mrs Gandhi, for further estrangement. The signs of restlessness among a large section of Assam's 450,000 tea garden workers over whom the CPI(M) and the CPI have considerable influence are also evident. Persistent attacks and the pernicious ostracism of the supporters of the CPI(M) and CPI has had its impact on the sufferers. The sheer number of the people now vociferously opposed to the movement is frightening: frightening because a confrontation will mean catastrophe. What more compelling reason can there be than this for the agitators to pause and ponder?

Another major cause for anxiety is the possibility of extremist elements gaining control if the agitation continues. As the movement is a spontaneous outburst against years of deprivation, no single person or group has absolute control over it. Already various trends, often working at cross purposes, have surfaced within the movement itself. There are distinct signs of parallel centres of power developing.

The students and the politicians are clearly split. On June 5, the AASU alerted its units to keep a watch on a sudden proliferation of the GSP units, reminding them that the AASU had launched the agitation not to advance anyone's political ambitions. "The AASU", the statement further added, "had received information that some interested persons had been en-

for the state's development relying exclusively upon the state's own resources. Then there was a call to the people to withdraw all their deposits from the nationalised banks and turn them over to the local non-nationalised banks and financial institutions. The raising of the volunteer force; the setting up of underground cells; the talk of a sovereign Assam or a larger union in the north-east; the rumours of Assamese youths training in China; the links of some movement leaders with the insurgents of all tend to confirm the fears that the movement is more than a demand for economic protectionism. Although still in a minority, the extremists are already in a position to influence the course of the movement considerably. No wonder sensible Assamese are wondering whether everyone has not had enough.

At the same time, the administration has been making unobtrusive efforts to create a climate of trust. For instance, it has already released most of the agitation leaders (62 out of 99) detained during the brief show of force in April. Orders have been issued for the screening and the detection of the immigrants who have entered illegally after March 25, 1971. More important, H. C. Sarin, the Principal Adviser to the Governor has succeeded to a great extent in salvaging an administrative machinery that was nothing but a wreck, destroyed by its partisan involvement in the movement. One reason why the movement continued so long was the complete identification of the

gaged in certain things in the name of the Gana Sangram Parishad to fulfil their selfish ends" Expectedly, the GSP reacted very sharply, to the extent that it held the AASU guilty of helping the 'conspiratorial forces' to scuttle the movement. Denying that its members had been nursing political ambitions as has been claimed by the AASU, a statement issued by the GSP on June 8 asserted that the ASSU was unnecessarily creating confusion. It particularly resented the AASU directives for monitoring the activities of the GSP. As we had reported earlier (SUNDAY, May 25) the movement is now clearly split in two camps — the doves and the hawks. The battlelines are also clear. The strident note in the GSP attack on the AASU confirms another suspicion — that the extremists are gaining ground over the moderates as the stalemate continues.

There are definite signs that the good intentions and the sincerity of the AASU may not be enough to halt the ascendancy of the extremists if a breakthrough is not achieved soon. The agitation has already raised expectations to absurd heights. It is not unusual to hear people talking dreamily about Assam in terms of oil-rich west Asian countries. Demands have been raised for more than a sevenfold increase in royalty for the Assam crude, from the present Rs 42 a tonne to Rs 315 a tonne. Secession rings out in the advertisement that appeared in the local Press recently inviting assistance to set up a non-official parallel planning board

administration with it. Sarin has earned some grudging admiration all round. "When he came, we thought he was sent here to kill us. We thought he would be another Tikka Khan," a student activist confessed. Instead, he is all over the place, talking to people, seeking remedies for their economic malaise. The people were impressed by his visit to the Indo-Bangladesh border. ("At least he shares our concern for the infiltrations"). His emphasis on economic development has also been welcomed. Simultaneously, he is holding private discussions with the movement leaders, their advisers and other important citizens to find a way out from the present impasse. "The climate," the Gandhi Peace Foundation mediator, B. G. Verghese points out, "is certainly better than what it was". What is most encouraging is that a lot of flexibility is evident.

The movement leaders, barring the extremists in the GSP are willing to resume negotiations. But who will bell the cat? The movement leaders are reluctant to take the initiative because that may be misconstrued as capitulation especially after the GSP has made it known that nothing less than the acceptance of 1951 as the cut-off year by the Government can persuade them to the conference table. The indications are that the AASU may not be dogmatic about 1951 as the cut-off year if the Government does not insist on making the cut-off year 1971. AASU may not also insist upon the restoration of the conditions prevailing in Assam before



AASU leaders Bhagu Phukan (with glasses) and Prafulla Mohanta (with beard)

APRIL 2 (the date when emergency ordinances were promulgated) as an essential precondition for the talks. They are now prepared to suspend the agitation and talk if all the detained leaders are released ("Without them can there be any purposeful discussions?"); if the disciplinary proceedings against the Government employees are stayed ("We cannot possibly forsake those who have stood by us"); and, if the Government initiates the process of detecting the foreigners who came to Assam since March 1971 ("Even Mrs Gandhi agrees that the foreigners coming after 1971 cannot stay").

Of course, they are yet to get over some of their reservations about New Delhi's motives and intentions. One complaint is that although the Government has been saying for quite some time now that it has intensified its vigil along the Bangladesh border the influx of migrants has not abated ("Yes, they have ordered an increase in the number of border posts, but they have forgotten to send personnel to man them"). Another sore point is the emergence of the AASU ("The Government is actively encouraging the takeover of Assam by the foreigners"). However, these reservations are not likely to be serious obstacles on the way to the confer-

ence table, if the Government can convince the agitators that some positive steps would be taken to pacify their sentiments.



NCE the AASU and the Government meet at the conference table their differences are likely to narrow down further, and a solution may not be very difficult to achieve. Indeed, twice before they have been close to a settlement: once during the meeting between Mrs Gandhi and the AASU leaders in New Delhi in February when the AASU leaders were prepared to get on with the job of screening and detecting the foreigners without stipulating a base-year for it. The settlement was not achieved because some militant elements who joined in the talks later would not budge from their demand for the acceptance of 1951 as the cut-off year. The second occasion was when the Governor of Assam, Lallan Prasad Singh suggested 1967 as the cut-off year. The movement leaders were inclined to give the proposal serious thought. But nothing emerged as the Government, this time, did not pursue the proposal seriously.

The indications are that, if and when the talks resume, the AASU

may not press hard for the deportation of the people who immigrated to Assam during the 1951-61 decade. Against this concession they are sure to demand more funds from the Centre and a special status for the state, at least for the next ten or fifteen years. Nevertheless, the dispute will then narrow down to what is to be done with the immigrants who have come to Assam in the period between 1961 and 1971. The movement leaders are in no mood to make any compromise on this. They may agree to let the Hindu immigrants stay on as stateless persons on humanitarian grounds but insist that the illegal Muslim immigrants must go. They feel that some one million people, at least seventy per cent of them Muslims must have had illegally immigrated to Assam during that period. The Government computation, however, is that the number of illegal Muslim immigrants would not be more than 30,000. On this point the talks could get bogged down again.

But will the talks begin at all? The mood of the dominant partners in the GSP is certainly unhelpful. After having worked up emotions to such a feverish pitch, can AASU break with the GSP and carry the burden all alone?

A solution is possible, but ...

How can the Assam tangle be solved? To find an answer SUNDAY correspondent Tooshar Pandit talked to three important members of the AASU 'think tank'—Ganesh Phukan, 62, a retired Finance Secretary of Assam; P. G. Barua, 42, the youngest of the three brothers who among themselves own the ASSAM TRIBUNE group of publications; and, Munindranarayan Duttabarua, 50, the editor-proprietor of the influential Assamese weekly SAPTAHIK NEE-LACHAL. Their replies:

GANESH PHUKAN

NO sane person wants this agitation to continue. There has to be some settlement, the sooner the better. Obviously, the initiative must come from the government. It cannot evade its duties and responsibilities behind the excuse of an uncongenial atmosphere in Assam. Agitation or no agitation, the government is obliged to defend the country against foreign aggression or infiltration. It cannot simply say: We stop doing our duties, because of the agitation. To start with, it can take up the screening and deportation of the immigrants who have come to Assam after March 25, 1971. This can create an atmosphere of trust and pave the way for a dialogue leading to a



solution. A dialogue may begin once the government does two things: one, releases all the detainees; two, stays all the disciplinary actions against the government employees who stood by the movement. Simultaneously, the students can suspend the agitation. The blockades on the movement of jute, timber, bamboo and plywood will be lifted. The oil-blockade will continue till the government withdraws the emergency measures introduced in Assam on April 2 and an agreement is

reached. My understanding is that the students are willing to consider sympathetically the cases involving the immigrants who had come between 1951 and 1961. Not much of a problem there. This brings us to what should be done about those who have come during the next decade—between 1961 and 1971. About this, the government must spell out a definite plan of action and here the students are likely to be less compromising. That does not mean that they are going to overlook the human aspects of the issue. Nevertheless, some thinning out is, perhaps, unavoidable. If the government does not act fast, it is quite possible that some people out of frustration may adopt more militant postures.

P. G. BARUA

THE agitation must stop. But, before it can be suspended and the negotiations resumed, the movement leaders must be convinced that they are not going to lose their face with the people who gave them a blank cheque by turning up in millions at their beck and call. I guess one way out is the government's acceptance of 1951 as the starting point. What I suggest is this. Screen the entire population of the state; ascertain who are the people who have immigrated into Assam since 1951. I

Photographs by Tooshar Pandit



am sure many of these immigrants are legitimately entitled to the citizenship of the country. Give them the citizenship. For the rest of the immigrants we can work out something. The deportation of the whole lot of them is impossible. At the same time a majority cannot be reduced to a minority by illegal immigration. A balance has to be struck somewhere. This brings us to the question of defranchisement. Doubtless, some people will have to be defranchised. In sorting out the problem a certain amount of compromise is inevitable. It has to be solved in a spirit of give and take. Nobody can possibly ignore the human aspects involved in the issue and nobody wants to. For instance, a lot of people have come as refugees. They certainly deserve humane consideration. We

cannot possibly turn our back on them. Today conditions in Bangladesh are no better than what they were in East Pakistan in 1948. So, people will still come, even if the entire border is sealed. We have to keep all this in mind while negotiating a settlement. Incidentally, I think the negotiations will have a greater chance of success if along with the movement leaders other important people from different disciplines and different walks of life lend their wisdom to the talks.

MUNINDRANARAYAN
DUTTABARUA

THE stalemate must end. If prolonged it can be dangerous. The students have focused the agonies and the fears of Assam reasonably and adequately and the next generation of the Assamese are not going to be dominated by the alien immigrants. The point has been well made. At the same time, it must also be realised that the deportation of the aliens will not solve all our problems. The maladies are essentially economic and any solution to the present tangle has to take into account this fact. It is about time the socially committed people from various disciplines joined the students to reach a negotiated settlement. This is because the negotiations are bound to involve various social, economic and political aspects of the problem and it is better that they are handled by experts. That will reduce the chances of making mistakes. And mistakes we cannot



afford to make: posterity will not forgive us. I do not have any taboo against the politicians as such, but, my emphasis is on social commitment (rather than politics). Association with the old crop of politicians is out of question since they do not have any commitment except towards their own well-being. But, certainly the movement has thrown up a new crop of socially committed politicians—for instance, people like Nibarun Bora, Girin Barua and others. It is they, who, along with the former bureaucrats, professors, engineers, and the committed intellectuals, who must play an important role in setting the matter with the government. Any solution, of course, must ensure that the interests of the Assamese are secure. The ball is really in the Government's court.

Three wise men

Many of the acknowledged leaders of the Assam movement are student leaders, or fringe politicians whose careers so far have been marked by a singular lack of success. The experience of the last seven months has also been a lesson in how to conduct and manipulate mass psychology towards a desired goal. So the movement must be having its behind-the-scene mentors conducting the skilful and sophisticated psychological warfare that a battle of attrition of this kind necessarily calls for. The names that are frequently mentioned in this connection are: Dharmananda Das, the first Assamese Chief Secretary of the state and currently the Chairman of the Assam Tea Corporation; Ganesh Phukan, a former Finance Secretary; Hiranya Bhattacharya, a serving IPS officer; Dr. Biren Bhattacharya, the Sahitya Akademi winner novelist; P. G. Barua, co-owner of the Assam Tribune; Kumud Nath Sharma, the dean of

faculty of law in Gauhati University; H. K. Barpujari, professor emeritus, Gauhati University; Ajit Sharma, a Rajya Sabha MP; Munindra Narayan Duttabarua, editor-proprietor of the Assamese weekly Saptahik Neelachal; Lolit Rajkhowa, lecturer at the University Law College; Dr. Debaprasad Barua, a professor in Gauhati University; and Nagen Saikia, general secretary of the Asom Sahitya Sabha. Subir Roy profiles three of these wise men.

AJIT SHARMA, currently a member of the Rajya Sabha where he went on the Janata ticket in 1978, has to his advantage good looks and some powers of oratory which make him ideally suited for a leading role in any popular movement. And this he has been doing through much of his political career: In the historic railway strike of 1974, or the various linguistic movements that

have been sweeping Assam periodically. He is a college teacher by profession and a socialist of the Lohia school by political persuasion. Mr. Sharma's analysis of the problem facing Assam is remarkably similar to that of the RSS but his declared political position is officially poles apart from the RSS. In the Janata Party he belonged to the anti-Barbora group, but they have been colleagues in politics through much of their careers. He has made considerable sacrifices in going to jail for various causes but his critics say that in the process he has also sacrificed his socialistic ideals.

Ajit Sharma's links with the agitation were forged fairly late. Initially his role was limited to asking the Union Ministers embarrassing questions in the Rajya Sabha and eliciting replies larded with facts that were then used by the movement with telling effect. His main links are with the younger sections of the movement's leadership, his particular friend being a former AASU president who has considerable influence over some

AASU leaders. But he does not get along with the politicians in the Gana Sangram Parishad. His advice is sought by the AASU leaders before a major decision.

Dharmananda Das, the amiable chairman of Assam Tea Corporation, was the first Assamese Chief Secretary of Assam. It was he who drafted the 119-page memorandum that the AASU submitted to the P.M. During his long tenure as chief secretary to the previous Congress Government, there were few important administrative decisions that he was not a party to and almost no important document about whose existence he was not aware of. The strong point of the agitation has been the well documented case it has prepared of central neglect and local inaction in economic development and in checking illegal immigration. In this his role has been invaluable. He has made the agitators aware of many crucial and hitherto secret Cabinet decisions, much to the embarrassment of the state's political leaders, which contributed largely to their present loss of credibility. Mr. Das's links with the movement's leaders were forged fairly late, in January, when the hard bargaining with the new government at the Centre began.

Dr. D. P. Barua is probably the only communist not only supporting the current agitation but actively participating in it. He was a comrade of outstanding repute who went to jail many times for his political affiliations and for his work with the trade union movement. A member of the Students' Federation during his college days, he actively supported the CPI and later joined it. When the Party split in 1964 he supported the CPI(M). He became associated with several government employees' unions in Assam and also the All India Confederation of University Employees' Unions. Although his support for Leftist causes never wavered, he sided with the 1972 agitation in Assam over the medium of instruction. In the 1972 Assembly elections, there was an alliance between the CPI(M) and some other Parties, including a regional one called the Peoples Democratic Party. The PDP was then headed by Dr. Gaurishankar Bhattacharya, currently a leader of the Janata Party in Assam and fairly sympathetic to the movement. Dr. Barua spent most of his time campaigning for Bhattacharya who was his relative. Even in the 1978 Assembly elections he campaigned actively for CPI(M) candidates.

D. P. Barua travelled in south India in May and June to mobilise support for the movement. His presence has done a lot of good to the image of the movement. As part of the intellectual task force he has written extensively in the local Press.

Is the RSS active?

By TOOSHAR PANDIT

EVERY morning at 6 a.m. an assorted group of people dressed in khaki shorts and half-sleeved shirts carrying canes turn up for drill at a public playground on the bank of Brahmaputra in Machkhwa, the business centre of Gauhati. The leader of the group carries a flag—a triangular piece of red cloth tied to a mast. The group falls in line as its leader plants the flag in the ground. For the next two hours, this group faces the flag and hops and bends and strains and stretches to the commands of its instructor, a portly middle-aged man. The proceedings end with a prayer—a vow to defend the Hindu religion, the Hindu rashtra to the last heartbeat. It is sung in chorus: "Oh motherland so affectionate to your sons, we salute thee always. Oh! Hindu land we have grown up so happily in you. Oh! merciful sacred land, let our bodies perish for you" run the lines of the prayer.

Such prayers can now be heard every morning not only in different localities of Gauhati but almost in every major town and city in the Brahmaputra valley. The RSS, which had just four units, one each in Gauhati, Dibrugarh, Silchar and Shillong, in 1948 now has about 200 branches

in the Brahmaputra valley alone, and has been adding on an average of some 25 branches every year since 1978. Till the Janata Party came to power in 1977, the RSS kept a low profile all over the North-east region, including Assam. "They would not even invite the Press to the various jamborees and the camps they organised", recalls a veteran journalist who has been tracking the Assam scene for over two decades.

With the coming to power of the Janata Party in 1977, the RSS came into the open by holding a series of training camps, expanding its shakhas, and launching extensive campaigns to popularise its ideas and dreams. And, more significantly, it started taking the Press into its confidence. For instance, it made public a project it had started years ago in Arunachal and which had been a closely guarded secret till then. Called the Social Experiment in Inter-state Living (SEIL), the project is meticulously planned to effectively indoctrinate people into the RSS ideology. The scheme is simple. Under the project, the RSS picks up small children aged between four and five years from poor families. The children are sent to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh or other states where the RSS has a significant following and are placed in

Tapan Das





In Assam, many people tell you in private conversation that the movement is not directed so much against the Bengali Hindus as against the Bengali Muslims. "We are not going to make any concessions in our demand for the screening and deportation of immigrants who entered the state between 1961 and 1971", says an important adviser to AASU. Then with a wink he asserts that during this decade the influx has mostly been of Muslims.

the care of various families where they are educated and cared for. This way after they have come of age and been sufficiently indoctrinated they are transplanted in their original environment. Arunachal has been picked for the experiment for the simple reason that it is one tribal belt in the North-east where the Christian penetration is insignificant.

Even when the RSS set up its first branch in Silchar, it knew that communal divisions in Assam would provide certain advantages that no other state in India could offer. The communal politics of Assam has a long, complex and none-too-credible record dating back to the late 19th century. Successive governments initially encouraged Muslim immigration for economic reasons and subsequently because the Muslims were viewed as a dependable vote bank. The RSS saw in the situation the ideal conditions for testing the strength of its concepts and thus Assam became the guinea pig for experimenting with a lethal idea. The RSS was also quick to realise that Assamese caste Hindus, who were the leaders of the community, resented the Muslim immigration as much as the RSS did, although their reasons were different. The Assamese caste Hindus felt that the Muslim immigration threatened their economic and political supremacy and the RSS decided that this feeling of insecurity could be capitalised on.

At the first hints of simmering discontent and long before the Assam agitation acquired a definite shape, the RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras decided that a visit to Assam was necessary to boost RSS activities there. He toured Assam extensively in March 1979. An interesting fact is that during this tour, he chose Nalbari, a small town some 125 kms south of Gauhati, as his base. It was here that he stayed with the father of Hiranya Bhattacharya, a DIG of the BSF who for his involvement in the Assam agitation had to be shifted to an innocuous post at a later stage. More important is the fact that the Assamese caste Hindus are predominant in Nalbari and a number of the Assam agitation leaders come from that area. Ten months after the departure of Deoras, Nalbari was the scene of a brutal communal massacre in which 29 Muslims were killed.

THE RSS has been taking an active interest in the Assam agitation ever since it began. Besides it has also been trying to influence its course both overtly and covertly. It was the RSS general secretary Rajendra Singh who really sought to give the movement a communal turn when he suggested that the Muslim immigrants be driven out of Assam while pleading for the retention of Hindu immigrants on humanitarian grounds. That was November. But he was just reiterating what Deoras had said when he visited Assam in June 1979—his second visit to the state that year. Addressing the closing ceremonies at an RSS camp in Gauhati on June 29/30, the RSS chief argued that if steps were not taken to dilute the Muslim population of the state, Hindus would be reduced to a minority while the Muslims would take control of the state.

Atal Behari Vajpayee came to Gauhati in January and in his conversations with a number of Assamese citizens he too appeared to share the views of Deoras and Rajendra Singh. Certainly a section of the elite was impressed since they too hold an identical view. In Assam, many people tell you in private conversation that the movement is not directed so much against the Bengali Hindus as it is against the Bengali Muslims. Even the movement leaders, the AASU are willing to let those people remain who entered the state prior to 1961. An important adviser to the AASU says that this is because during that period the influx has largely been of the Bengali Hindus. "We do not mind them staying here. But we are not going to make any concessions in our demand for the screening and the deportation of immigrants who entered the state between 1961 and 1971", he explains. Then with a wink he asserts that during the decade in question the influx has mostly been of Muslims.

Apparently, the RSS has been able to gain considerable support in the movement because of its thesis that the Muslims are bad and the Hindus are good and so the Muslims must be driven out. This is being rationalised by the argument that it was the Muslims who had opted for partition and hence they have no moral justification to settle in India, whereas the

Hindus came or were coming to India because conditions in Muslim-dominated East Pakistan or Bangladesh were unbearable. If the RSS has not yet been able to take command of the Assam agitation it is because the movement itself is divided into three distinct trends.

There is one trend which subscribes to the RSS thesis, but this is a minority group. So too the people who think that the only solution to Assam's problems is to drive out all Bengalis, irrespective of their religious inclinations. In fact, these two trends are at loggerheads with each other. At Ulubari, a poster has appeared saying "Down with the RSS" under the signature of the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad. Whether the poster is authentic or not, the fact remains that many people think the RSS motives are suspect insofar as it pleads for the retention of the immigrant Hindu population.

The dominant trend however is against any communal distinctions in the identification of the "foreigners". "A foreigner is a foreigner whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim", says an AASU leader. This is one reason why the RSS has not been able to hold complete sway over the movement although its influence is still significant. For instance, many AASU volunteers appear to be following the system and commands of the RSS. If the Government information is correct, then the organisers of the AASU volunteer force approached the RSS for instructors to train the volunteers. The RSS instead suggested that the AASU volunteers train along with RSS swayamsevakas at the RSS akharas. Although the AASU declined the offer, it is organising its voluntary force on the same rigid lines of discipline as advocated by the RSS.

This may not necessarily stem from the fact that the AASU believes in the RSS ideology. More likely, they find the RSS system most effective. Besides, since the people of Assam have thoroughly and conclusively rejected all the established political Parties, the RSS offers some kind of an alternative to a society divided bitterly along communal lines. After all, the basic fear of the Assamese people is that they are going to be swamped by the non-Assamese. The RSS strategy is to exploit that fear in order to expand.

AASU prepares for battle

GAMOCHA literally means a cloth to wipe your body with, which it is. In Assam, however, it is more than that. Only those dearly loved are offered a *gamocha*, a piece of handspun white cloth with red margins: the Assamese exchange it ritually among themselves at the *Bihu* festival that ushers in the Assamese new year. It has now also become the symbol of defiance. The boys and the girls who are the members of the AASU *Swechchshebi Bahini*, the volunteer force, who troop to every conceivable vacant lot every morning at six sharp for their daily drills all wear a *gamocha* tied around their waists.

The AASU first promoted the idea of a volunteer force in February. "Our struggle," the AASU secretary Bhrigu Phukan said, "is going to be a long drawn affair, with the government hardly in a mood to accommodate". To sustain this struggle, the volunteer force was mooted. "We must get ourselves organised, for the people inimical to Assam are also organising themselves to fight us". This is the rationale for raising the volunteer force. According to Prafulla Mahanta and Bharat Narah, the president and the acting general secretary of the AASU, the Bangladeshis have been receiving arms training with the help of some legislators, political parties and also with encouragement from some government officials. "We constituted the force to protect and defend the Indian nationals from the onslaught of the foreigners. How can this be an offence in the eyes of law?" they ask.

The tasks allotted to the force are: preserving communal harmony; safe-

By TOOSHAR PANDIT



guarding the economic interests of Assam; monitoring transfers and appointments; defending the culture and the values of the Assamese; identifying the enemies of Assam and resisting their conspiracies; fighting anti-social activities; ensuring self-reliance; assisting the government in the task of identification of foreigners and preventing encroachment on government land; collecting various kinds of data and evidence for the AASU; and, elevating the moral standards of the students. A tall order.

Although the idea was conceived in February it actually took firm shape by the end of May. On May 30, with a lot of fanfare, the birth of this organisation was celebrated in Gauhati. The person in charge of this organisation is Jaynath Sharma, a student activist from Mangaldai, who has been designated the convener of the organisation. But, even before the organisation could get going, the government came down heavily on it, especially in the areas considered sensitive. The drills were banned in the districts of Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Larrang, Goalpara and the hill district of Karbi Anglong. A warrant was issued against Sharma, forcing him to the underground.

On the face of it the volunteer force looks harmless. A little physical exercise by unarmed groups of people (aged between 15 and 35) could hardly be the cause of serious alarm. But, obviously, the government thinks that there may be other motives behind raising the force. Especially because the people in command are among the more militant members of the AASU. One enthusiastic campaigner for the force is Deb

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Dutta, the son-in-law of Nibaran Bora, the acknowledged spokesman of the militant view point. Further, even if the force is harmless today, the government is inclined to feel that such drills can set off a chain reaction impairing communal harmony and aggravating existing tensions. "What if other linguistic or minority groups decide to raise the force, we cannot possibly deny it to the others," says a government official. His argument is that raising of the force is bound to create suspicions and misgivings among other communal groups, thus spurring them to reactions that can lead to serious trouble.

But perhaps the more compelling reason for the government to look at the volunteer force with misgivings is the disturbing report that some highly professional people are behind the move. Two names that are being mentioned in this context are: Debi Kakati, a former DIG of Assam police, and a former SP, N. Chongkakati (whom Bhatnagar Commission held to be an extremely communal officer for his role as the SP, Dibrugarh, during the language riots of 1972). Kakati had failed to become the IG of Police although when he retired he was the senior-most police officer in the state. Kakati has had some experience in this area. He was actively associated with the raising of the Special Security Border (SSB) in Assam after the Sino-Indian war in 1962. The organisational structure and the training schedule of the AASU volunteer force are very similar to that of the SSB, quite a few trainers have been in fact, borrowed from the SSB. Not only the SSB people, but also a large number of retired army and police personnel are involved in the training programmes. We asked an instructor supervising the drills at the lawns of the B. Baruah College, near the Gauhati stadium,—"What commands do you use?" Pat came the reply, "The Army command". One can also detect that some of the patterns are identical to those used in the RSS drills. The volunteer force is being sought to be raised with the RSS psychology and paramilitary discipline. There are even evening classes to train the girls in nursing and first aid. "My motherland must be freed from the foreigners", one recent circular of the AASU volunteer force says. The note of militancy in it can hardly escape notice.

Of more concern are the reports that the extremist hardliners in the movement, unlike the AASU, are raising armed underground squads. The Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chattra Parishad is playing the leading role in organising such squads. One of its leaders, Prabin Gogoi, is on record as saying that "village organisations exist" to preserve the identity of the Assamese and to "protect" land from the foreigners and to resist a crack-down. Even the AASU is suspicious of such underground vigilantes. Is it possible that they are being organised to undermine the AASU? The question assumes particular relevance now that the Assam movement is clearly split between the 'doves' and the 'hawks'.

'My failures in the poll have not decreased my faith in the people'



GAUHATI was once the base camp for the battle of Saraihat. It is again turning to be one". When Nibaran Bora wrote these words in a series of three articles published in three successive issues of an Assamese weekly *Nagarik* in December 1977 nobody took notice of it. Two and a half years later the article, entitled "Islamabad vs Dacca: Delhi vs Dispur," has become the theoretical basis for the secessionist demands of the extremists in the current Assamese agitation.

Nibaran Bora, son of a police officer, never looked like a winner. From panchayat to the Parliament, he lost all the elections he fought, most of them miserably. He even lost in the anti-Congress wave of the 1977 Assembly polls. With it he lost his faith in the electoral process and came out with his highly explosive thesis which, in a nutshell, is: Assam had always been independent till the Burmese occupation in 1820. Six years later the Burmese sold the Ahoms to the British. Since then the story of Assam is the story of reckless exploitation, first by the British and then by New Delhi. They brought in the outsiders — Bengalis, Biharis, Nepalis — to man the administration, the tea-estates, every nook and cranny that held long-term exploitative potential. Now, the outsiders dominating the economy are poised to assume political control as well.

He can now afford to smile, for he is the hero of those who believe their salvation is in secession. What kind of man is he? How does his mind work? What made him reject the parliamentary politics? For answers, here is a profile of Nibaran Bora, written by Bora himself:

During my childhood the image of my father as a very unusually successful police officer impressed me deeply. In 1931, I carried a second impression in that in a direct confrontation with his personality he seemed weaker to Karmabir Nabin Bordoloi. The image of Sri Gopinath Bordoloi in 1941 again cast a deep impression. I watched him offering individual satyagraha which in 1947 inspired me to organise the refinery struggle. The student movement of 1941 finally shaped my inward resolution of being a police officer in the image of my father. An accidental roadside meeting with Tyagbir Hem Chandra Barua on the August 9, 1942 impelled me to leave the guise of a businessman which I was then dressed in. I took many

decisions. I was led to violent activities. I was inspired in this. I had the delight of setting fire to a whole American Military Camp at Pandu. Placing delayed-action time bombs in the Collon College. The movement caused strained relations at home. I left for an unknown destination — Calcutta, Benaras and later I reached Lahore. I joined the Punjab University. I had to manage my own finances. I entered a commercial firm, B. K. Herman & Co Ltd. Two year later I came back, engaged myself with Students' Congress and the Congress. I was busy with trade union activities in 1946 itself. For leading strikes in May 1947 at the Teen Aai Tea Estate. I was arrested on August 15, 1947 the day of Indian Independence, while I was still a member of the Indian National Congress. This made me bitter. I had been a member of the Congress Socialist Party. I left the Congress earlier and then the CSP. I remember the association of the Worker of the Assam Transport for whose cooperation and courage it became possible for the state of Assam to nationalise road transport before any other state in the Indian Union. My association with labour and trade unions increased. Within a short time I came to be associated with the railway trade union being at that time of the six important trade unionists in India extending from Assam to Izzatnagar in UP. I am deeply grateful to the Indian Railways and the railwaymen who gave me an opportunity to know the railways, my country and my people in a way, more vivid, than any other organisation could have offered me.

The refinery satyagraha in 1957 gave me a new insight into the character of the village youth. I have hesitated, always, to reassess the situation of 1960 but I have certain assessments which I have a feeling I must write for the comments of men wiser than me. My many failures at the polls have not decreased my faith in the people but it has certainly shaken my faith in the leaders, and the current state of politics. Since 1962, I have developed differences with my political friends, my family and invited misery upon myself. My long association with trade unions and the present role of trade unions have given me an opportunity for serious rethinking in the matter. I want to write and invite controversy on my assessment of the political activities of the last decade. I have a belief that this will help me and help the young generation to make a reassessment of their political elders.

The persecuted

There is social ostracisation, reports SUBIR ROY



Dr Purna Sharma

OUR movement is peaceful, democratic and non-violent, say the Assamese. Maybe. But what is the fate of those Assamese who have serious theoretical reservations about the movement and are courageous enough to say so openly? Is the movement confident enough to tolerate their dissent? Or is this miniscule group of conscientious objectors being ostracised and persecuted?

Dr Purna Sharma; at 41 he is a sick man. The illness had been detected a month back—an enlarged heart, high blood pressure and cholesterol. He looked a little dazed and, apologising for his frail voice, said that he was not always like this. We huddled together in one corner of the room to hear him tell his story. He had been a student of Gauhati University and later obtained a doctorate from Imperial College, London; he was now with the chemistry faculty. In early 1979 he was elected president of the Gauhati University Teachers' Association (GUTA) for the next one-year term. Till then he had been a very popular man on the campus. The brightest feather in his cap was the report of the enquiry commission headed by Justice B.N. Sharma which probed the affairs of the university during '78-'79. The commission's findings on the charges of corruption, mismanagement, and irregularity in the affairs of the university caused the vice-chancellor, registrar and controller of examinations to resign. And it was Purna Sharma who, as spokes-

man of the GUTA at the commission's hearings, had relentlessly fought to nail the culprits.

Then came the agitation in Assam. In September last year, the GUTA came under tremendous pressure from the Gana Sangram Parishad to form a sangram samiti in the university. Many teachers had serious reservations about the movement as it was then being conducted. The GUTA formulated its stand at a general body meeting on September 24. It decided against forming a samiti in the university but expressed itself against foreign nationals. The Post Graduate Students' Union called a meeting on November 12 at which it invited representatives from the various associations. The issue to be resolved was whether to have a sangram samiti in the university or not. When Purna Sharma conveyed the decision of his general body, there was an uproar. About 20 students encircled him on the dais, shouted abuses and threw chairs and the microphone stand at him. He was dazed. Some teachers and students came to his rescue and carried him away. The next day he resigned as president of GUTA but was persuaded by his colleagues to complete his term. Since then Dr Sharma has been ostracised. Only a few of his friends drop in on him. The ostracism extends to his family also. They are taunted on the roads. A few days ago some repair work was done at Dr Sharma's residence at the university campus. The next morning he found that someone had scrawled on the soft cement work 'Bangali, CPM'.

Dr Sharma's health may have broken down under the tension but another man in a similar position who seems to be truly indomitable is Hiren Gohain. Fair, bespectacled and with a Trotskyite beard, he impresses immediately with his clarity of perception. Educated at Presidency College, Calcutta, Delhi University and Cambridge, Dr Gohain started developing a personal ideological standpoint only in 1969 when he returned to India and joined the English faculty of Gauhati University. With time he slowly proved himself to be one of those public spirited individuals who, while not being politicians, feel so moved by certain issues that they are compelled to take a public stand on them. He did this first in 1971 when there was an incident in Lumding in which an Assamese cultural troupe was reportedly manhandled by



Nirupama Borgohain

Bengalis. He went around Gauhati in the night with a public address system exhorting the people to abjure communal violence. He thought that an individual could and should do something to preserve public sanity. Then came the 'medium of instruction' movement of 1972 when he distributed leaflets and was mobbed. He waged his battle through the columns of *Natun Prithibi* which he then edited.

Dr Gohain first came into public conflict with the current movement at a meeting on the university campus held on November 13 to condemn the attack on Dr Sharma. When he rose to speak, he was shouted at and gheraoed. From then on, he has been condemned at public meetings and people have been exhorted not to buy and read *Kalakhari* which he now edits. He and his family are under social boycott and whenever he goes out he is afraid of being attacked. The torchlight procession that was taken out recently stopped before his house and those of some of his colleagues of similar persuasion, and slogans were raised against them. Something of Dr Gohain's attitude is revealed in the incident near Panbazar in early April. Because of the many threats to his assistants he took it upon himself to distribute his paper. Passing groups jeered at him and when later he and a friend were walking over the nearby railway bridge, three jeering youths followed them and kept up a barrage of insults. He couldn't take it anymore and burst out: "These people want to run the country but they don't know

how to behave on the street". They slunk away. In early April, on his way to Calcutta to attend a seminar on the Assam problem, he was met at Gauhati airport by about half a dozen youths who told him very politely but firmly to speak up for the cause of Assam. He had the clear feeling of being threatened. On his return there was a flood of letters in the local Press exaggerating and misrepresenting what he had said in Calcutta. The most touching is the reaction of his six-year-old daughter. Before a visiting friend recently she burst into tears and said she didn't like it anymore in Gauhati and could they go away somewhere else please? Perhaps that would have spared Gohain the physical injuries he suffered when goons assaulted him on June 6 at a busy street intersection at Chandmari in broad daylight. Badly beaten, Gohain is now lying in a hospital bed.

Hiren Gohain still has his job. But the same cannot be said of Nirupama Bargohain, a noted Assamese prose writer and till recently assistant editor of the weekly *Neelachal*. In January she went to the riot torn areas of Nalbari in Kamrup district, as a representative of the National Federation of Indian Women, to investigate the atrocities that had allegedly been committed on women by the army. On her way back she ran into a group of Gauhati Medical College students and asked them if they had been to a particular refugee camp. They said that they had not and didn't care because at that camp there were only Bangladeshis. She was shocked and reminded them of their Hypocrites oath. This didn't endear her to them. Soon they caught up with her and publicly abused and insulted her in the bus back to Gauhati. The next day at a public meeting in Gauhati organised to condemn the atrocities on women, chaired by another litterateur, Nirmal-ābha Bardoloi, the army was not the only target of attack. The Medical College Union general secretary alleged that Nirupama Bargohain had gone to Nalbari to help the Bangladeshis. Immediately she became another hate object of the agitation.

More was to follow. While she was in Nalbari, her employer, the editor-proprietor of *Neelachal*, Mr Munin Duttabarua, was also in the area seeing things for himself. He objected to her being in Nalbari. Besides, he said, the management took a very dim view of her attitude towards the movement, which was 'tarnishing' the image of the paper. Soon a show cause notice arrived and after two months of letters her services were terminated. Neither the National Union of Journalists of which she was a member, nor the Assam Journalists' Association has done anything to



Homen Bargohain

help her get back her job. In February in articles in *Ka'akhar* she narrated her findings in Nalbari.

From September Nirupama Bargohain had started having serious doubts about the effects of the movement on Assamese society. In a way she was prophetic. In November she wrote a short story dramatising a communal conflict resulting from the movement. *Prakash*, brought out by the Assam Publications Board, turned it down. This was a rather novel experience for her. Usually people came to her for her pieces. In late April history was vindicating her predictions. Today, she gets outrageously abusive mail. Friends do not invite her to marriages any more. Her elder son, who used to have many friends, is now jeered at when he goes out. The last straw has been a visit from her publisher, who was hoping that her latest book would do very well. But now disaster stares him in the face:



Dr Hiren Gohain

many booksellers say that they will not stock her book.

Homen Bargohain is, in a way, a bit luckier than the others although he too is an outcast in Assam because he does not support the agitations. "I am not gregarious by nature," he says. So the social boycott does not really affect him. His personal war began when he wrote two articles in November in *Nagarik*, which he edits, arguing against the current agitation. His paper has been burnt several times in Dibrugarh and Kamrup districts. News agents all over are under considerable pressure not to stock *Nagarik*. Threatening letters and abusive telephone calls are routine now. He was formerly editor of *Neelachal* but quit over differences with the family which owned the paper, the Duttabaruas. He looks remarkably sprightly for his 48 years. He could not express himself freely earlier in life in print as till 1969, he was a member of the Assam Civil Services. Even then he fell foul of the departmental authorities when in 1960 he wrote a letter in *Assam Tribune* on the agitation then sweeping the state. As sub-deputy collector of Chhailgaon in Kamrup district at the time he had the experience of dealing with the death of seven people in a carnage near his house. Originally a believer in the liberal ethics, he feels that the mainstream of our national politics has come to a dead end. Therefore, one can no longer ignore the role Marxism can play in the present context, he feels.

Even people like Syed Abdul Malek, a former president of the Asom Sahitya Sabha (a constituent of the GSP) and the most popular Assamese short story writer today, are not sacrosanct. On May 5, a group of young men surrounded Malek, who is a Muslim, at the bus stand in Sibsagar demanding an explanation for his association with the All Assam Minorities Students' Union. "But, I have nothing to do with either the minority or the majority students' union", a puzzled Malek replied. The youths, however, contested his version rather aggressively. "We know you came here to organise the AAMSU", they said. Then they pulled out a sheet of paper and asked Malek to sign it. "You must sign this statement condemning the AAMSU", they insisted. They would not let him board the bus till he complied. "Finally, they let me go, after I yielded", says Malek.

Malek was not considered important enough to be invited to this year's conference of the Asom Sahitya Sabha. Not only that, a number of speakers at that conference spoke critically about Malek, drawing applause.

Incidentally, Malek is a Rajya Sabha MP.

What are Assam's politicians doing now?

MR JOGENDRA NATH HAZARIKA, who headed the state's 88-day Asom Janata Dal coalition when the legislature was being sent into animated suspension, still lives in the Chief Minister's official residence at Dispur. But he no longer cherishes his earlier hope that the legislature will be resuscitated and he will regain his "status quo ante".

Put up in a cushy ministerial bungalow by virtue of his being the opposition leader of the legislature, the earlier Chief Minister, Mr Golap Barborra (Janata), is living very uncomfortably. After his unceremonious departure on September 4, 1978, he refused for some time to vacate the CM's residence, which he had renovated suitably. And, even after moving to his present residence, he was still hopeful. His JLP was still the single largest Party in the legislature and it seemed that it would regain the support of some other Parties by adroit manoeuvring. That hope did not desert him even after imposition of President's Rule, since some legislature groups, in their anxiety to restore a democratic Government in the state, were striving for a Janata-Congress(U)-Lok Dal coalition Ministry. But all those hopes have since vanished and, let alone the one-time Ministry-makers, even his own colleagues in the JLP (number reduced from 61 to 29) seldom meet him nowadays.

Another loner is Mr Sarat Chandra Sinha of the Congress(U), Mr Barborra's predecessor both as Chief Minister and opposition leader. Populist, sagacious and regarded as the most vivacious among the present politicians of the state, Mr Sinha, also a member of his Party's central working committee, is almost alone now even within his Party. Some of his close colleagues in the APCC and the CLP have already succumbed to the new Indra wave and, among those who have not, many are not in the Congress(U). Wearing his old, unkempt, man-of-the-masses look, Mr Sinha ruefully said: "I have not visited the countryside for a long time." Because he has nothing to tell the people. The Prime Minister did not give in to his request to publish a "white paper", defining a "foreigner" and quoting actual figures of detection and deportation of infiltrators since Independence. He himself worked out these figures from Government and other reliable documents and wanted to get them publicised both within and outside Assam. But his compatriots in other Parties, especially the Janata, have not favoured the proposal, shuddering at the possible reaction it may evoke from supporters of the agitation.

Among the other national Parties, even the CPI(M), which made its

By PRADEEP DASGUPTA

debut in the state legislature following the 1978 elections with 11 members is now in deep freeze. Like any other political Party in the state—Janata, the two Congresses or the CPI—it has lost its contacts with the people in the fields and factories as well as with the students.

What is troubling the political Parties is the state? Reacting to the joint appeal made to them by some central political leaders on May 31, 1980 to call off the current agitation on the foreign nationals issue, the agitation leaders (AASU and AAGSP) said: "These Parties have no relevance to Assam" adding that the "main opposition Parties" did not attend the conference of May 31, convened by the Prime Minister. The Bharatiya Janata Party President, M Atal Behari Vajpayee, in an interview had said that no Party in Assam could provide a solution to the foreigners problem as all those political Parties "have become irrelevant". And these political Parties, he pointed out, included the Janata. One, however, knows that though the BJP is yet to get a firm foothold in Assam, some of its promoters in the state are frequently seen with the RSS, who are not "irrelevant" to the current Assam agitation possibly because they do not constitute a "political Party".

Leaders of some of the regional Parties, who now lead the 'apolitical' AAGSP, had declared that the national Parties in Assam were "irrelevant" long ago. Mr Nibaran Bora left the Socialist Party and formed his Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad in 1977. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that his Party first started debunking the political Parties as "irrelevant" in the context of Assam's—and the whole of the north-eastern region's—struggle for preservation of its socio-cultural entity. And, Mr Bora's view was borrowed by all other Parties spearheading the current movement—AASU, Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal, Asom Sahitya Sabha, and so on—after they collectively formed the cartel known as the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) following a day-long mass rally at Gauhati in mid-November 1978.

And, curiously, even some leaders of the national Parties fell in line with the AAGSP's charade. In a symposium held on the Gauhati University campus on December 2, 1979, leaders of the Janata, the CPI and the RCPI echoed the views of the spokesmen of the PLP and Jatiyatabadi Dal that the Lok Sabha poll should be postponed in Assam pending the settlement of the foreign nationals issue. The JLP held a 12-hour "hunger strike" in front of the

state secretariat at Dispur on December 30 against "non-postponement" of the Lok Sabha elections in Cachar district. Nevertheless, the Janata Party did take part in the election in that district.

Mr Y. B. Chavan, then Home Minister in the caretaker Union Government, held a round-table conference on Assam in New Delhi on November 28, 1979. The conference concluded that the Lok Sabha poll should be held in the State.

On December 15, 1978, Mr Nibaran Bora asked all the MLAs and the Rajya Sabha members from Assam to resign "in public interest". He said that since no political Parties could submit nominations for the Lok Sabha poll owing to the people's objection, the legislators did not have the 'locus standi' to retain their seats. Further, he argued, "the present set of legislators were elected on the basis of the 1977 electoral rolls, which have contained 13 lakh foreigners". On December 26, 1979, the PLP in a statement condemned the legislators' efforts to "form a new Government and share power". It blamed Messrs Devakanta Borooah, Sarat Sinha and Bedabrata Barua "for the present state of affairs" in Assam.

The activities of most of the national Parties in recent times being election-oriented, one is not surprised when a Janata leader in Assam says that no political programme will be workable unless the foreigners issue is settled in terms of the Constitution and existing laws or, in other words, precisely on the lines propounded by the AASU and the AAGSP. But the Janata cannot join the movement or the AAGSP hand-wagon publicly because, apart from being a national Party, it has also to take into account the fact that not all those voters, whose faces look like foreigners, may really prove to be so.

Virtually alienated from the people due to the loss of contact, the national Parties in Assam these days function through issuance of statements. One such statement, issued on June 4 by the CPI's state secretary, Mr Promode Gogoi, indicates why they are inactive. Mr Gogoi said that "from the very outset of the current agitation, there was continuous attacks directed against political Parties, particularly the CPI, the CPI(M) and other Left Parties". And, in recent times at several places "the workers of the CPI and its mass organisations were assaulted and humiliated in various ways". In some places, he says, offices of the Party, copies of its weekly organ and other documents "have been burnt". But on the same day, the AAGSP in a statement, alleged that the Congress(I) and the Left Parties were playing a communal role in Assam, "threatening the age-old communal harmony in the State".



Life is full of *Campa-Cola* times



The movement and the media



ON May 16, Mr. Jatin Góswami, convenor of the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), entreated Mr Siddharaj Dhadha of Acharya, Vinoba Bhawe's Sarva Seva Sangha: "Please give wide publicity to our current problem. Send Vinobaji once to Assam". Realising the need for favourable publicity, the leaders of the movement were anxious for respected voices on their side. On May 9, a campaign was launched to explain what the movement was about. Spokesmen went to different parts of the country to project the movement's viewpoint in other states. The Asom Sahitya Sabha, a component of AAGSP, had published a handbook on Assam's culture and traditions in the early part of May and, before the month was out, several batches of university and college teachers, lawyers and students, equipped with this book and a plethora of other literature on the movement, fanned out in southern, western and northern regions of the country.

Never has Assam hit the headlines of national and international newspapers and magazines as during the past few months. Never before have so many reporters, photographers and observers from far and wide come to Assam "to visit this forgotten land" as a supporter of the movement told me. Newsmagazines have written cover story after cover story; each day's newspapers and radio have reported or analysed some aspect of the agitation. "Thus", a friend who is in the movement points out, "Assam's long cherished passion to be heard by the rest of the country, which was definitely a factor behind the building-up of the agitation, is being satiated in ample measure". One has only to visit the newsstands at Gauhati or anywhere else to see this. In Assam itself, media is booming. Not only have the circulations of Assam-based newspapers and magazines increased within and outside the state, but those of papers and magazines coming from outside have also risen astronomically.

Within the state, the movement has spawned a spate of "Pravdas". Even the Assam Tribune group of newspapers, which seldom these days publishes any news other than that which supports the movement, cannot compete with the periodicals which have sprouted during the past few months in promoting the movement. And all of them sell, irrespective of quality or credibility. This is unprecedented in a state where the longevity of a journal was lamentably low till the recent past. Several new journals and periodicals are

By PRADEEP DASGUPTA



being published directly by the sponsors of the movement: *Samanway* by AASU, *Muktidut* by Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal, *Istahar* by a group of intellectuals and *Karmayogi* by the co-ordination committee of government and non-government employees.

It is a fact that the Assam movement did not hanker after much publicity outside the state until recently. In fact, they seemed interested only in Assamese media. Even today, the statements issued daily by the leaders of the movement, whether in AASU or AAGSP, are not distributed to the reporters representing non-Assamese newspapers. Nor are "foreign" journalists invited to Press conferences. Though the movement is nearly a year old, it came into national focus about eight months ago. During the earlier period, the purpose of AASU and its co-sponsors like PLP, Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal, etc., was clearly to spread the message among the people of the state through the local Press and the local stations of All India Radio. AIR, Gauhati, had been rendering such useful service to the movement that when the government, in April, decided to monitor it, the leaders of the movement raised a huge row. AASU leaders, in a statement on April 21, complained that "an officer, without the knowledge of Assamese language, has been appointed in AIR, Gauhati, who has declined to broadcast news of the

AASU", which fact, they said, "the whole country should take note of" and the people of Assam "should be vigilant" about. On May 13, a call was given by these leaders to boycott AIR. And, between May 21 and 29, when the government and semi-government employees had been asked to stage a "non-co-operation movement", AASU and AAGSP volunteers came out in scores to picket at the gates of Gauhati AIR round the clock. Casual artistes apart, even some of AIR staff members joined the picketing, leaving only a skeleton staff to keep the station alive. It is difficult to say if even a skeleton staff could have been available to help the Gauhati station remain on the air had not the Director-General of AIR, Mr. Ubedul Latif Barua (who, incidentally, comes from Assam), visited his native state twice in April and once on the eve of the non-cooperation movement to personally organise things. He had also deputed some Assamese members of his New Delhi staff to Gauhati to assist the loyal employees.

The earlier state administration, immediately following imposition of President's Rule, was allegedly complaisant towards the agitation.

However, all this was not to be under President's Rule. The officials, who came to Assam to govern the state as advisers to the Governor, stalled the printing and circulation of these material on the Government account. And when Mr H.C. Sarin was appointed as principal adviser to the Governor, he brought with him Mr Amrita Mehta, a former special correspondent of AIR, to look after the state publicity department. Mr Mehta, it appears, is moving slowly and steadily without desiring to publicise his strategy. But what is known is that during his recent visit to New Delhi, he met his old "friends" in different newspaper organisations and talked to other journalists from outside who visited Dispur during the past few weeks. What is seen is that the Government Press notes, though fewer in number and thinner in contents these days, have changed. Also, one of the three advisers to the Governor briefs the Press every afternoon on the situation in Assam. If one reads these reports in the morning newspapers along with the daily statements issued by the movement leaders, one can have a fair idea of the actual goings-on in the state. Another significant point is that the State Government weekly journal *Rajpor Batori* (People's News), which recently was distributed as a free publication to ensure wider readership, now carries reports mostly of Government activities.

Did the local administration listen to Delhi or AASU ?

By SUBIR ROY

THE arrival of Mr H. C. Sarin in Gauhati on April 21 to take over as the principal adviser to the Governor marked a watershed in the history of the agitation in Assam. Previously, the state administration, either through its own inactivity or the active cooperation of sections within it, had made it possible for the movement to grow from strength to strength. The administration reached its nadir of incompetence and impotence on April 19 when the indefinite curfew it had imposed on Gauhati had to be withdrawn in the face of massive demonstrations. As the law and order situation in Gauhati did not necessitate the imposition of curfew, it made sense only as part of a package of measures designed to convey to the movement the Government's new decision to act tough. But how could the Government be so foolhardy as to act tough without any preparation? The responsibility for this decision seems to rest on the shoulders of Mr R. S. Paramasivam, the then chief secretary. Even when journalists told him at 9 a.m. that day that people were forming processions in various localities and that they should be stopped there if the situation was not to get out of hand, he replied that he had no information about the public's desire to break the curfew.

The local administration's attitude to the movement did not develop overnight. It was the logical culmination of an "anti-foreigner" feeling that has been growing in the state since 1971 when the then Chief Minister, Mr M. M. Chaudhury, appointed Mr Dharmananda Das the first Assamese chief secretary of Assam. Mr Das was a promoted IAS officer and his appointment as chief secretary in supersession of two others antagonised the top non-Assamese IAS officials in the Assam cadre. Then began a long battle between the two groups, the outsiders being led by Mr S. K. Saigal. The Assamese officials had a long-standing grievance that they were not trusted and therefore kept out of sensitive posts. A new dimension was added when Mr Sarat Sinha took over as Chief Minister. It was during his time that the non-caste Hindu Assamese, for whom he coined the term "other backward classes", came into their own. The caste Hindus who had considerable weightage in the administration and who are so important in the present agitation did not find their best patron in Mr Sinha.

The division within the Assam police began during this time with Mr Hiteswar Saikia (now Congress-I).

an Ahom, as Police Minister. There was no love lost between him and the caste Hindus. One officer who got a raw deal under him was Hiranya Bhattacharya, till recently the DIG Border. When he was promoted to the rank of DIG it was against consistent lobbying by some minority politicians and he was put in a non-administrative and what was then considered the harmless post of DIG Border. Times changed, foreigners and illegal immigration from Bangladesh became a dominant issue and there was Hiranya Bhattacharya deporting Bangladeshis with a vengeance in 1979.

After the formation of the first Janata government, Mr Paramasivam was made chief secretary. The movement people always had easy access to Mr Paramasivam who himself has been seen at the AASU headquarters at Gauhati many a time. He also had several meetings with PLP president Nibaran Bora at the North-eastern Hotel in Gauhati. To the lower rungs of the administration looking for guidance on which sections to fraternise with, this must have had its own impact. When the Janata Government in Assam was toppled Mr Paramasivam went on leave for two months. The movement people took out a procession to the state administrative headquarters at Dispur demanding his return. He returned but stopped meeting the AASU and GSP people.

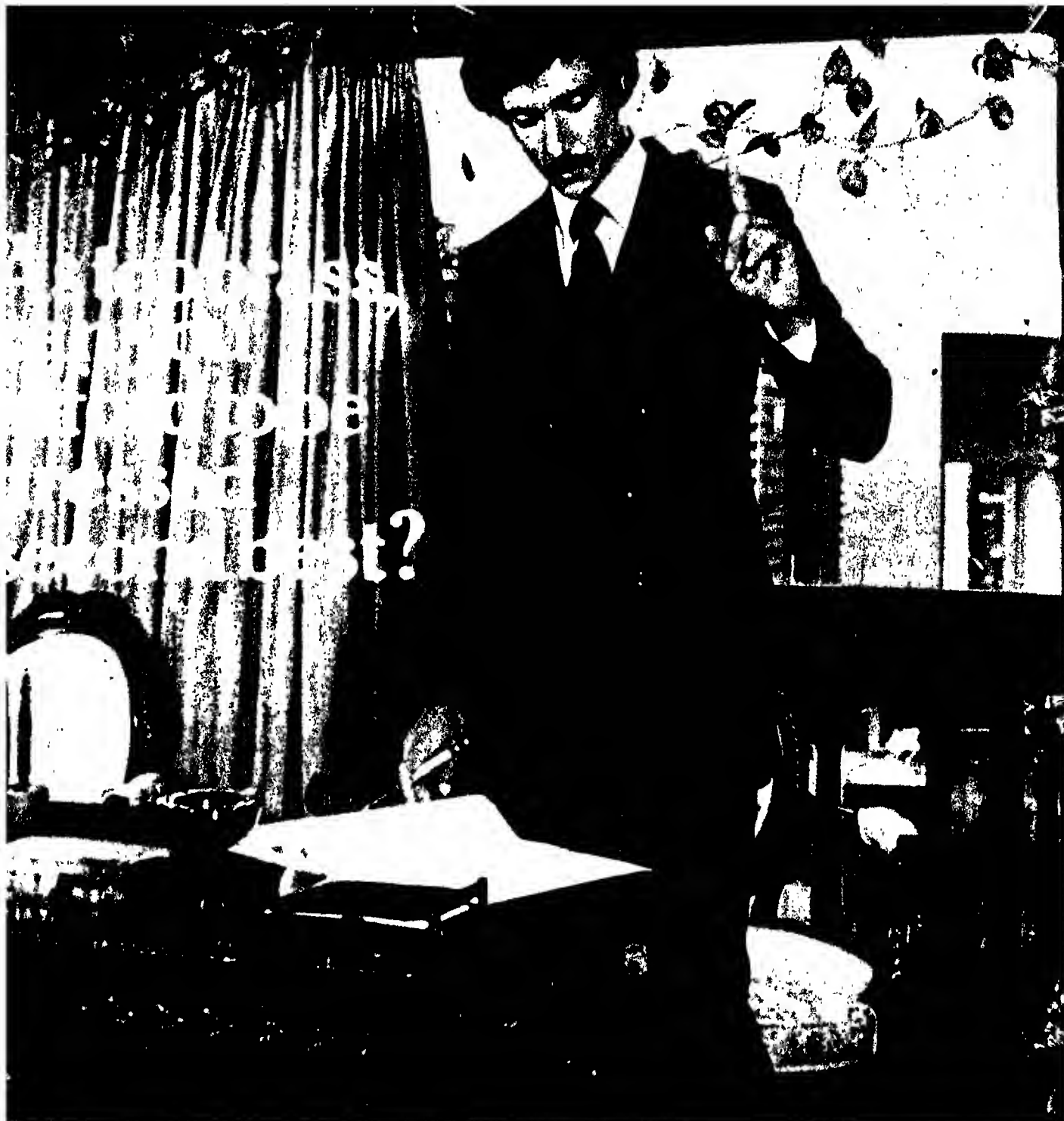
Mr Paramasivam may have used his best judgment in keeping up a dialogue with the movement in the absence of a clear policy emanating from the Centre during the period when there was a caretaker Government in Delhi. But what was the role of the administration before that? Did it have an active role to play in 'launching' the agitation? The bi-weekly 'Agradoot' has played an important part in preparing the minds of sections of Assamese for the current movement. In mid 1978 the paper launched a strong anti-Bengali and secessionist campaign. It is worth recalling that every previous agitation in Assam has been anti-Bengali and it was only in November 1979 that the leaders of the present agitation declared that they were not against Bengalis and other outsiders but against foreigners. From mid-1978 there was pressure on the publicity department from the Home Secretary to clear 'Agradoot's' pending bills. This matter was raised in the 1979 Assembly budget session and from August 1979 'Agradoot' started receiving more Government advertisements at higher rates. This was not justified by their actual circulation.

What has been the role of the

Government employees? Till this agitation started, the CPI(M) used to dominate both the central and state Government employees' unions. But in November 1979 ad hoc bodies were formed for new organisations to enlist the cooperation of Government employees for the movement. From the time the movement began, work in Government and semi-Government offices has been paralysed or at best has gone on intermittently, thus giving the movement its real teeth. This could not have been possible without the cooperation of the employees. The ad hoc bodies have now been formed into organisations like the Assam Karmachari Parishad and the Assam Central and Semi-Central Karmachari Parishad. The nationalised banks, LIC and FCI employees have been brought under the purview of the latter. The All-Assam Bidyut Karmi Sangha has been formed with the blessings of the chairman of the ASEB to oppose the existing unions affiliated to the CITU and the INTUC.

The Assam Civil Service officials have also played their role in the movement though till recently it was in a covert manner. Conscious as they are about their service rules, they have left it to their wives to voice their feelings. In early December several leading politicians were subjected to repeated gheraos in Dispur by groups of women, mostly wives of ACS officials. In one of these Sarat Sinha was so deeply humiliated that for a period he completely withdrew into the background. ACS class I officers submitted a memorandum to the chief secretary on May 14 insisting that certain demands of the agitation be met by May 31. ACS class II officials have also sympathised with the movement and cooperated with the programme of the continuing satyagraha. Altogether 84 officials have been suspended so far for participation in the movement, the seniormost among them being of the joint secretary level. There is now a move afoot to co-ordinate the various officers' associations so that their cooperation with the agitation can be made more effective.

The pattern of cooperation of different levels of the administration with the agitation was given the formal seal of official approval when in mid-1979 Chief Minister Golap Barbor asked the students to assist the electoral authorities in deleting the names of foreigners from the electoral rolls in Mangaldoi. Since then there has been no looking back. And the embattled minorities have a single, all-important complaint—they get no help from the administration in times of need.



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Beyond Assam : greater storms

By SUBIR ROY

THE agitation in Assam is to be taken more seriously, not because of what it has done to Assam, but what it has done to the rest of the region. The demand for deportation of foreigners has proved to be the headiest of slogans and provided the rallying call for malcontents in the region who were looking for a respectable cover. Those who believe that there is an international conspiracy behind the agitation in Assam find added proof for their convictions in the way the foreigners issue has not stayed confined to the Brahmaputra valley. The question of a conspiracy has become redundant now as the reality on the ground is a boon to interests hostile to India and causing concern to those on whose shoulders the security of the country rests.

The only area in the north-eastern region which has remained aloof from the current turmoil is Nagaland. This is ironic as for two decades, beginning from 1956, the Naga insurgency provided a serious threat to the territorial integrity of the country. The Naga problem was officially buried when the Shillong Accord was signed in 1976. That incidentally was also the high watermark of Mr L. P. Singh's career as Governor for the region. Not that there has been no apprehension lately over Nagaland. The fall of the Vizol and Jampur Ministries in quick succession raised fears of political instability bringing in its wake other problems. All eyes were apprehensively turned towards Dimapur where there is a large concentration of Bengalis and linguistic violence has occurred in the past. But thankfully nothing has happened. A good reminder though that the Naga underground is not complete-

ly a thing of the past is provided by Muiva and his group who are camping across the border in north Burma. In the recent past they have made two raids into Nagaland attacking both civilians and security people and periodically raised money from the villages. The Naga ethos was perhaps summed up best by a Naga Army officer who confessed that in that state everybody who is overground is an ex-underground.

The most serious security threat in the whole region is posed by Manipur. The state has been plagued by periodic violence for over two years now. On top of this, widespread violence erupted in late April as a result of the students' campaign against foreigners. This is where Manipur ties up with Assam. It is now confirmed that during the days of violence and seemingly endless curfew, a group of Assamese students were camping in Imphal. Also the students demand for the expulsion of foreigners and the postponement of examinations started in early April close on the heels of a crucial meeting of students from all over the North-East in Dibrugarh during March 26-28. The orchestration can thus be clearly traced. The most lethal combination in Manipur would be a joining-up of the forces of the students and the extremists. Did this happen in April? Here is the record. While the violence in Imphal received the most coverage, what happened in Sagolmong in the Sadar area of the Central district was much worse. There several villages, mostly inhabited by Nepalis, were burned. Those who visited the area a couple of days later witnessed a most horrific sight of devastation, some corners being unapproachable because of the stink of rotting carcasses of cattle which

were burnt to death. This is no ordinary area. It is from here that R. K. Tualchandra, the PREPAK leader and some of his comrades were captured recently. Four more extremists were captured from here in early June. Much further back in history, in the Forties, the area was the stomping ground of Manipur's first and most illustrious progressive leader, Irabat Singh. Thus the worst anti-foreigner violence took place in an area with a history of extremist activity.

The extremist violence in Manipur is difficult to eliminate because of the haven Burma offers to those who cross the border and seek shelter in it. Right now the members of the Peoples Liberation Army led by Biseshwar Singh are camping and regrouping there. Northern Burma provides a shelter to the extremists because the writ of the Burmese administration does not run there. This is owing to the inherent weaknesses of the Ne Win Government in Rangoon, the difficult nature of the terrain and inadequate roads. Burma also is proving to be a source of American arms which have come in from Thailand and which the insurgents are lapping up with the liberal funds at their disposal, raised through bank robberies and forced subscriptions from Manipuri businessmen and politicians. Indian extremist groups find easy cover in Burma because the Burmese tribals living in the adjoining areas are ethnically similar, creating a fraternal feeling and making identification difficult. In these areas of Burma operate several Burmese insurgent groups like the Kachin and Arakan Independent Armies. The spectre haunting security planners is the fall of the Ne Win Government, the control of the area passing into the hands of these Leftist extremist groups and the effective extension of the Chinese area of influence right upto India's extreme eastern border. Even now the tracking down of Indian extremist groups in Burma is difficult because the Burmese Government is reluctant to agree to joint mopping-up operations. Their fear is that of China. In fact, so great is the Burmese kid glove treatment of China that Burma has not yet demarcated a crucial disputed 12-mile stretch of its border with China near the India-Burma-China tri-junction because of Chinese territorial claims in the area.

The latest area to be added to

NEXT WEEK

Genocide in Tripura

The story of how more than 500 Bengalis were butchered in one week.

Reports by M. J. Akbar and Tooshar Pandit

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the spreading scenario of violence to drive out foreigners is Tripura. Last year Tripura witnessed violence instigated by the Amra Bangali protesting against the State Government's legislation to safeguard the interests of the tribals. Now the boot is on the other foot. It is the Tripura Upajati Yuva Samiti which is behind the current violence. Tripura's was in fact the original sin. The influx of Bengali refugees there after Partition has turned Tripura's tribals into a minority in the state and it is this that everybody in Meghalaya quotes in reply to the allegation that they are fighting an imaginary enemy. The foreign power relevant to the Tripura situation is Bangladesh. The Jampui Hills area of Tripura adjoins Bangladesh and is very inaccessible terrain. The Chittagong Hill Tracts area of Bangladesh adjoining Jampui Hills is again far from

Tapán Das



Ganu Sangram Parishad office



View from guest house no. one at Khanapara near Gauhati where the Governor usually stays.

Dacca. The re-emergence of Bangladesh as a factor in India's security considerations dates back to the fall of Mujibur Rahman. Prior to that the insurgents in Mizoram had virtually disappeared after the creation of Bangladesh. But Mizo National Front activity with all the attendant ambushes and killings is now back again in a big way. The Chakma Shanti Bahini stands interposed between these areas of India and Dacca and is a double-edged sword.

The other two areas touched by the ripples of the Assam movement are Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Meghalaya witnessed serious violence in October and December, 1979 in which eighteen Bengalis were killed. The election to the Shillong constituency was also postponed. In early June 1980, there was a mild fracas in Shillong over a CRP lathi-charge on young girls. The opinion in Shillong is that the real issue in Meghalaya is not that of foreigners, but Mr Ripplé Kyndia of the APHLC group in opposition using it as a means of acquiring power. Meghalaya has been kept free of violence only by its tough Chief Minister, Mr B. B. Lyngdoh. In Arunachal Pradesh the foreigners issue has so far surfaced only in April through a two-day bandh called by students.

What worries security planners and should also be exercising opposition and ruling politicians in Delhi is what would happen if there was another war with China under conditions like these. An external enemy could hardly be fought with such large groups of disaffected people in the North-East. That is why paying serious attention to the economic needs of the North-East is the crucial need of the hour and "special treatment" has a certain amount of logic to recommend itself. ■

LIVING

Not written of(f) yet

Kameli Juka



Glen, Jilly and Gavasinder

After what Bishen Singh Bedi himself described as a "traumatic season", the former Indian Test cricke-

ter is now spending the summer in Kashmir. But, according to Prakash Bhandari, Bedi is not on a holiday; he has taken with him innumerable clippings and records for the express purpose of completing his autobiography by October this year. His story may hit the stands before the Indian team leaves for Australia and should be a bestseller considering the fact that Bedi has had a lion's share of controversy. Besides, his fans—of whom there are many, both in India and abroad—are keen to know many an inside story. The only person who may be disappointed is Dom Moraes. He had planned on writing Bedi's biography but could not get down to it since he had to shift resi-

dence from Delhi to Bombay. Before leaving for Kashmir, Bedi withdrew the divorce suit which he had filed against his Australian wife, Glen. It appears that the two have decided to part peacefully. Glen has taken up a job in Melbourne and will be responsible for their two children, Gavasinder and Jilly. However, it seems that Bedi has been seen with a girl from Kanpur. The first time was at the Jubilee Test between India and England in Bombay when Greg Chappell, who had stopped over at Bombay on his way to Pakistan, spotted Bedi with a *shalwar-kameez*-clad girl at the Wankhede Stadium. Maybe Bedi's autobiography will throw more light on

Devi Prasad Sinha



Bishen Bedi

this and many other subjects; depends on how honest the cricketer can be as a writer.

Where on earth did the Lord stand ?

Where exactly did Lord Krishna receive the warrior, Arjun, and give him the *Geeta Updesh*? The Government of Haryana is interested in the answer and has announced an award of Rs one lakh with the title of "Raj Pandit" to anyone who can successfully locate the exact spot where the Lord had stood with the warrior.

According to the *Geeta*, Kurukshetra was where the incident took place. But that does not satisfy Chief Minister Bhajan Lal whose personal interest in the Hindu scriptures has prompted the state government to embark on the fact-finding mission. Mr Lal is keen to know the exact location in



Haryana Chief Minister, Bhajan Lal

Kurukshetra so that a suitable memorial can be erected there. Already scores of letters—most of them propounding individual theories—have been

received by the Sahitya Academy. The latter, hardly equipped to handle mythological matters, is trying to make the best of a rather unusual job.

Our players aren't lacking in technique but where they can't keep up with those of other countries is stamina. The Dr B. C. Roy Post Graduate Institute of the University College of Medicine, Calcutta University, is trying to establish the "norms of pulmonary efficiency of our players". First the players are being given lung tests. Then detailed information is being

Lung power

garnered on their food habits, residential environment, smoking history, family history, occupational history and social grading. The doctors with the project had a lot on their minds recently in Calcutta, what with the Federation Cup and the Asian Table Tennis Tournament. Hopefully we shall know

on a scientific basis why so many of our players are so short of breath. The doctors are sorry though that their data will be incomplete in one crucial way. The Chinese team at the table tennis tournament, which bagged most of the trophies incidentally, refused to cooperate. And the Chinese constitute one-fourth of the world's population!

Sons of the fruit

Ram Bai, alias Ammiji, is responsible for the birth of many children—no daughters, only sons. She is a refugee from Multan who stays in the Ram Darbar area in Chandigarh, where she receives hundreds of couples who have no sons. Ammiji is a son-producing genius and has been acclaimed as a *sufi* (saint) by the people who swear by her unusual powers. She claims that early in her life she came in contact with another *sufi*—the Kundewala Peer. She then lived the life of a *faqir*, and attained *sidhawastha* (divine powers).

In Chandigarh Ammiji's first client was a sonless zamindar. She gave him an orange which he ate and in a short while he was the proud father of a bonny son. Overjoyed, the zamindar gifted one acre of land to Ammiji who, in turn, gave him another orange. Soon the zamindar's wife bore him another son and in delight he gifted her another acre of land. Later, it is said, she received four more acres of land from the Hindi film villain, Pran.

Legacy of the Wolves

The grapevine has it that Euan Lloyd, producer of *The Sea Wolves* has written a letter to Mrs Gandhi, offering to hold a premiere of the film in India, as soon as possible and in aid of any cause of the PM's choice. Meanwhile, the film — the saga of the Calcutta Light Horse and the first foreign venture to be shot almost in its entirety in India — will have a royal premier in London on July 3. According to Mario Cabral e Sa, the film, which will be dedicated to the late Lord Mountbatten, is presently in the final process of dubbing. In a matter of weeks the grading will be completed and the final prints ready; the music for the close-to-ten-million pounds sterling movie has al-



Roger Moore: star of *The Sea Wolves*

ready been recorded. But that is not all. By all accounts *The Sea Wolves* has spurred the interest of "a few international producers, two of whom at the moment are seriously considering visiting Goa by September for a preliminary"

What's cooking?

The Lord of the Universe—Jagannath—may soon starve, unless the drought-affected state of Orissa is blessed with rain. The *bhog* (food) of the Lord, known as *Mahaprasad*, is cooked only with water drawn from two wells near the Lord's kitchen. But these wells are now virtually dry, reports Swarup Jena. What is left in them is muddy water and not too much of that either. The cooking, in the meanwhile, is

being done with whatever is available and thousands of devotees have had to eat food cooked with muddy water which, by any medical standards, is unfit for human consumption. Yet no one has fallen sick. This may well be attributed to the blessings of the Lord. However, if the two wells dry up completely, the Lord may be in a fix because tradition does not permit the use of water drawn from any other well.



M. K. Rustomji is one of those pucca sahibs — chirpy and adept at fine small-talk. And there's one thing he definitely isn't: the stiff archetype

Druckerji

of the management school spewing jargon. That is quite unusual considering that he is, by far, India's most successful author of management books. Ashish Rajadhyaksha discovered the real Rustomji in Bombay recently.

Rustomji was matter-of-fact and, sometimes vague about his achievements. He recalled another of his books — *Ali About Balance Sheets* — which had sold like hot cakes in the country: "I don't know precisely how much that book sold, except that you could

No kidding

When 15-year-old aspiring journalist R. Ramesh did the rounds in Madras, magazine editors thought he would not be able to deliver the goods. But when he went out and interviewed a couple of young heroines, they instantly revised their opinions, notes Arthur Pais. Suddenly he found he was getting more assignments than he thought he could handle. Since then he has sold over half a dozen articles and interviews. The corporation school student takes his own photographs too, with a borrowed camera. Besides, he has the full support of his parents.



Wow of silence

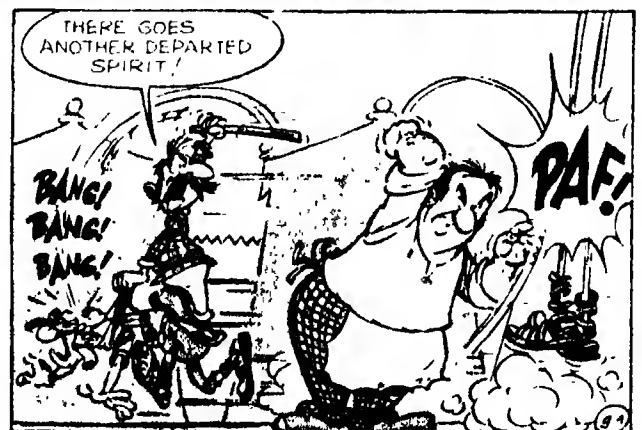


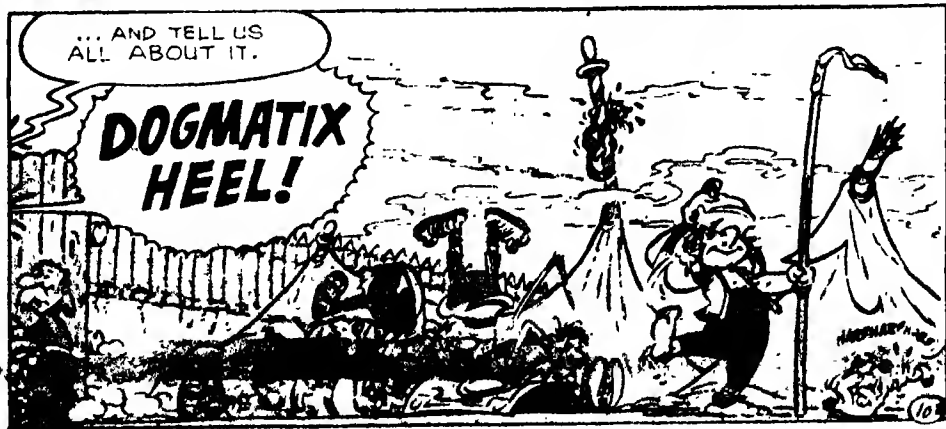
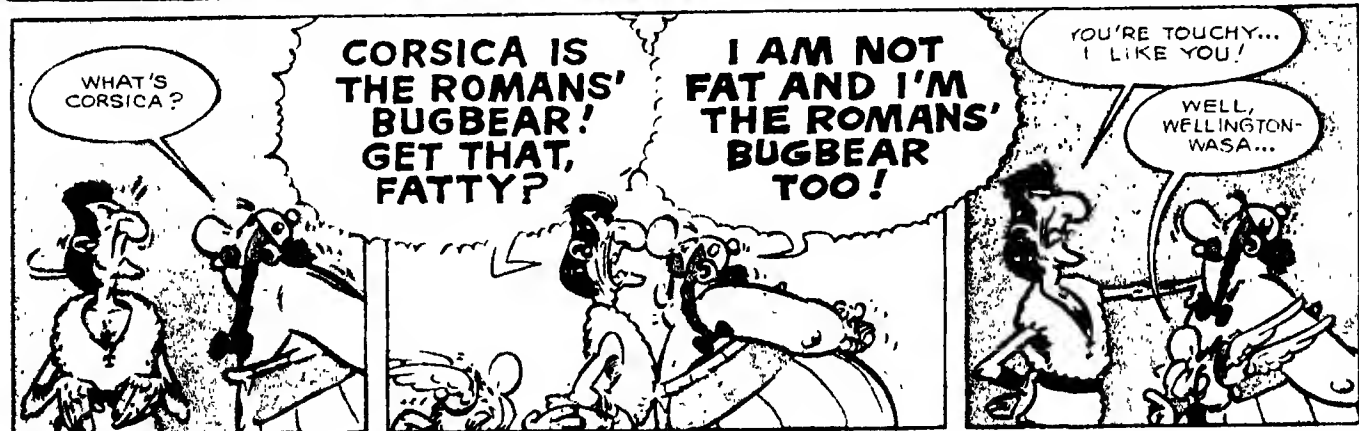
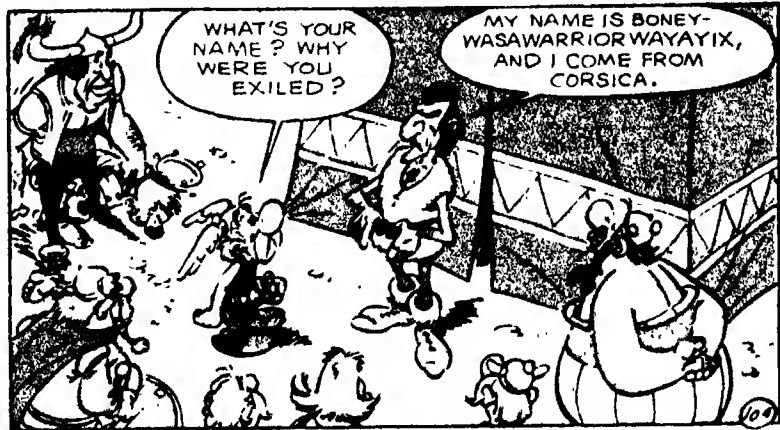
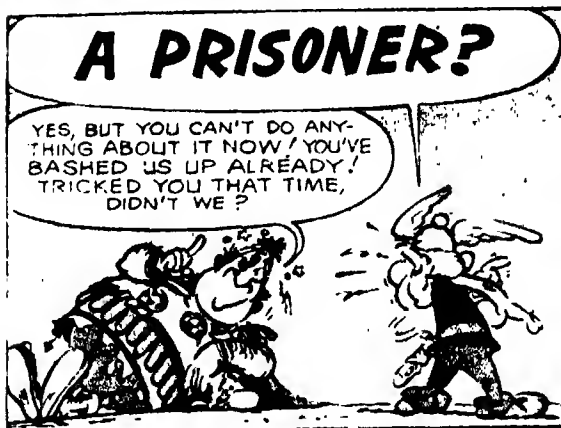
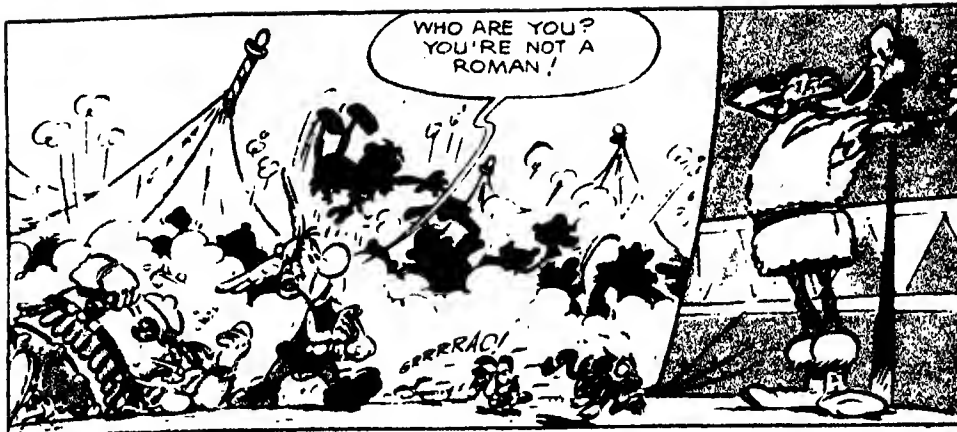
At the recently concluded general body meeting of the All-India Football Federation in Cuttack, most representatives from different state associations seemed to respect the adage that silence is golden. For example, Jarnail Singh, the ex-international. He did not speak a single word throughout the two-day meet, reports Sarajit Deb. To think that it was Jarnail Singh who had helped India win the gold at the 1962 Asian Games. It is ironic that the man who could have perhaps helped the AIFF most, chose to remain mum, while others, who have perhaps never even played the game, spoke to their hearts' content.

Not fare

Bombay's taximen are certainly intrepid. Recently, they suddenly went on strike. Apparently it all started when a cabbie indulged in a bout of fist-cuffs with an RTO inspector. The cabbie came off second best and had to be admitted to hospital. This resulted in a street call to all cabs to quit. Ashish Rajadhyaksha notes that he was lucky to get a cab but then again maybe it was the driver's attitude that made all the difference. "I'll take you," he said, "but close the windows, look like you're my friend, but if we're stopped, pay me and find your own way home."

safely say that it sold more than any other management book in the country, in fact, yes, more than all of them put together." Often, he was frivolous: "My books have just been accepted by China for local publication. I suppose, in the near future, they could replace Mao's little Red Book." And finally, he was slightly precocious: "I'm writing this other book on the views of management experts condensed. Actually Drucker — you know Drucker? Drucker was supposed to have been in on this, but then he opted out."





Her first priority is Assam

THE first phase of the plan of political consolidation is almost over. The Congress (I) has got a majority in eight of the nine states and Mr M. G. Ramachandran of Tamil Nadu is not expected to create any serious trouble for Mrs Gandhi. Instead, in all probability, the Tamil Nadu Government under MGR's leadership will try to develop fraternal relations with the central authority very soon. No one should expect a Basu-Ramachandran-Sheikh Abdullah combination to demand greater autonomy for the states. MGR was a close friend of Mrs Gandhi during her crisis and it will not be very difficult for her to win him over again. When she woos a politician she always goes all the way to get him. In MGR's case she will not have to go all the way—as a compromise halfway would suffice. As far as Sheikh Abdullah is concerned he would rather concentrate on the governance of his own state. The Kashmir leader is not in a position at the moment to spare time and energy to set up a united front to challenge the authority of the Centre. I am afraid, in the next few months his position is going to be less comfortable in Kashmir itself.

Today, Mr Jyoti Basu and his comrades in Kerala and Tripura are more interested in remaining on the gaddi than in grabbing more power for their states. Even if Mrs Gandhi tells them they must be satisfied with less power, Basu and his comrades will probably accept this, though they will make a lot of noise in public. In the political interests of their respective Parties the Communists are now more keen to remain in power than in fighting for rights for the states and the people. They (the Communists) bother least about principles when they decide upon their tactics and with regard to political trading they can outdo even the most unscrupulous businessmen. The question is, would Mrs Gandhi allow them to govern in these three states? To start with, neither does Mrs Gandhi trust the Communists, nor do the Communists trust Mrs Gandhi. Both sides are afraid of each other and both await the opportunity to finish the other off. Mrs Gandhi has the upper-hand at the moment and at the first opportunity she would level her sights on the Communists. The non-Communist opposition is in a state of great disarray and under these circumstances Mrs Gandhi cannot allow the Left and the Communists to consolidate and combine.



By BARUN SENGUPTA

But the situation in the North-Eastern states, especially in Assam, poses a great hurdle for Mrs Gandhi. She cannot take any major step in West Bengal or disturb the situation in the state before at least bringing the Assam situation under control. When that will be possible, no one knows. And till she is able to bring the Assam situation under control she needs some sort of co-operation from the West Bengal Left Front.

She is receiving this cooperation at the moment and she will continue to do so for a long long time. However, it is a case of two-way traffic. The Left Front of West Bengal also needs her cooperation, for if there should be an influx of Bengali refugees from Assam, the fate of West Bengal's Government would be sealed automatically. Neither will West Bengal be able to provide them with adequate food and shelter without the help from the Centre, nor will it subsequently be possible to maintain the linguistic harmony of the state. Besides, the Centre stands to gain nothing by taking over the responsibility of West Bengal directly after the creation of such a situation.

No sane person would dare to dislodge the West Bengal Government before bringing the Assam situation under control.

If Mrs Gandhi wants to take action in West Bengal before February-March 1981 she will have to bring the Assam situation under control by September-October this year. Thus, the longer it takes to solve the Assam problem, the safer it will be for the Left Front and the Communists. The reason is not hard to find. No sane person would dare to dislodge the Left Front Government of West Bengal before bringing the Assam situation under control.

Assuming Mrs Gandhi is able to solve the Assam problem by the end of this year and brings down the Left Front Government of

West Bengal before it can send six Left members to the Rajya Sabha in 1981, she is bound to face difficulties by 1982. First, her own Partymen in different states will create difficulties. Moreover the eternally disgruntled middle-class would pose a serious challenge to her authority. No amount of political consolidation can solve these two problems.

Congressmen, when they are in power, are bound to fight amongst themselves. This wrangling was evident in 1972 and is bound to surface this time too. Not that they will challenge the leadership of Mrs Gandhi or Sanjay, but they will question each other's authority. No one, not even Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay can stop them from doing that. Look at what is happening in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. More serious things are bound to happen in the newly captured states. The biggest drawback with the Congressmen is that the moment they come to power they forget that the people voted for Mrs Gandhi in expectation of certain things. Instead of trying to fulfil those expectations of the people, Congressmen-in-power always devote their entire energy and power to fulfilling their own expectations. In the process, they demonstrate their ugliest forms.

The second difficulty will come from the middle-class. Numerically the middle-class does not enjoy a formidable position in Indian Parliamentary politics. One can come to or occupy power in India even without its whole-hearted support, as Mrs Gandhi has done. But it is difficult to run the Government and the economy smoothly without the support and co-operation of the middle-class. The middle-class of our country is traditionally anti-establishment. Their aspirations have become limitless. But they are not willing to work hard any more. Even the Communists could not keep them happy for long in West Bengal. In the last Lok Sabha elections more middle-class people in Calcutta voted against them than did the poorer or richer sections. In 1977 however, the middle class was by and large with the Left. By 1982 (or even earlier) Mrs Gandhi will once again come into conflict with this middle-class—she on the one hand trying to bring them under her control and force them to their duties without clamouring for more, they on the other hand trying to get more money without doing much work. During the first stage of this struggle, there is every possibility that we will lose many of our present democratic rights again.

good times

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Stopping for a break*

and Double Seven,

*and then away,
away again.*

Minimum.

These are the good times.

Double Seven



Double Seven

The burden of power

By PRAN CHOPRA

FOR the fourth time in a row elections in India have shown that however fragmented our political Parties might be, the electorate is an amazingly monolithic and consolidated all-India political personality and no longer needs external or artificial stimulation to behave as such.

In the Lok Sabha elections in 1977, in the state Assembly elections in June the same year followed by the Lok Sabha elections last January and the recent state Assembly elections, a couple of hundred million voters have proved four times over that a single political impulse can permeate the whole country and evoke a verdict which is as valid in one corner as it is in the opposite corner two thousand miles away. The same issues, personalities and Parties can become the focus and cause of political behaviour in all parts of the country.

This four-fold verdict, twice in favour of Mrs Gandhi and twice against her, also confirms four times over that for India to vote homogeneously it is not necessary that there must be an external threat to make us forget our heterogeneity. I make this point because it is sometimes said that it was only because of an external danger, and transitory euphoria after overcoming it, that the Indian electorate showed homogeneity in the Lok Sabha poll in 1971 and the state elections in 1972. Nor is it necessary to have a father figure like Nehru around or an infant electorate which instinctively looks for a finger it can hold. It was no father figure which defeated Mrs Gandhi twice in 1971. The capacity for homogeneity now exists in normal circumstances.

This is not disproved by the fact that Tamil Nadu voted differently from the eight other states which went to the polls this summer, or that in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections most of the South voted differently from most of the North. We have not become a unanimous people, and I hope never will become one except in times of a national emergency. In any peace time election it is a welcome thing that some say yes and some say no. But proof of the political consolidation of the electorate lies in the fact that all the millions and millions of people are able to say yes or no at the same time to the same central issue, not only in the Lok Sabha elections but even in the midst of the diversity represented by state Assembly elections.

I will come a little later to the



apprehensions which have been aroused by the latest state Assembly results. It is important that we first grasp the wonderful truth that India, despite its many divisions and diversities has become a more unified political reality than ever before. This disproves the fear to which some of us surrender in our pessimism that our regional boundaries and the walls between linguistic and cultural groups will never let an Indian see an all-India horizon. What is needed is a leadership which has the will and competence, and above all a vision which reconciles and heals, to build on this truth.

This should help to dispose of the absurd statement by Mr Charan Singh that Parliament has been made irrelevant by the state poll results. Parliament can only reflect the people's verdict. If the people have voted so overwhelmingly for Mrs Gandhi, Parliament cannot deny

her the resulting power though one hopes it will guide her to use it wisely. If anyone made Parliament irrelevant it was Mr Charan Singh who let his personal ambition make him a tool in the diabolical game played by Madhu Limaye and thus made Parliament play false to the verdict the people had given two years earlier. If Mr Charan Singh were to look within with his eyes open he might decide never to open his mouth again.

More difficult to dispose of is the cynicism which is growing among the middle class intelligentsia about the political wisdom of the electorate. They say a massive answer may be a good thing but if the answer is a wrong one its massiveness makes it doubly wrong. Certainly there is room for some cynicism. Mrs Gandhi's recent record of performance as Prime Minister is not exactly brilliant, and despite the vehemence with which she denounces the performance of the Janata Party, she cannot destroy the fact that the economic and political condition of India has rarely been better than during the two years of Janata rule till the summer of 1979, and has rarely been worse than in recent months, including the months of Mrs Gandhi's second reign. Similarly, the record of the Janata Governments in some of the states, for example in Rajasthan, was good. If the people so readily forget a good performance and forgive a bad one how can their judgment be relied upon?

It is a good question but not an impossible one to answer. What India has witnessed is not a failure of democratic politics but of mass communication. Especially guilty of that failure are those mass media and media men who regarded themselves as the champions of the Janata Party. They almost totally ignored and perhaps never understood the good things, especially economic, which happened during the Janata rule. They fed themselves and their readers on a diet of political gossip about the infamous in-fighting in the Janata Party. Unfortunately, the tribal chieftains of the Party talked about nothing else. Therefore it is unfair to ask the people to judge Parties on the basis of facts which were never put across to them.

THE state of most Parties opposed to the Congress (I) became as bad and in some cases even worse, than their respective images. If this was true during the Lok Sabha elections it was even more pronounced during the Assembly polls. Therefore the voter cannot be said to have chosen unwisely. In the Lok Sabha elections he rightly preferred the all-India Parties (especially those which still had some credibility) to the regional

Parties. Local Parties, those which could mobilise support, did reasonably well in Assembly elections. Hence the two Communist Parties repeated their Lok Sabha performance in the Assembly elections along with the Akali Dal in Punjab and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu.

This cynicism is therefore misplaced. And it is worse. It is dangerous. If we cannot trust the judgment of the people, then what are we left with? Authoritarian rule of one kind or another? And whose rule will it be? Obviously that of the people already in power, which can be terminated only through a different judgment by the people, however expressed than the judgment they gave the last time round. Therefore, I do not see any alternative to trusting their judgment, nor any escape from the responsibility everyone has of helping to improve the means by which they exercise their judgment including more responsible use of the mass media.

This brings me to what is probably the most immediate and relevant apprehension, that the people may not be given the chance to exercise their judgment again. Two scenarios are feared. One is that India's difficulties are so great that no one can solve them by democratic means and turning to something else is inevitable. I do not buy that. I firmly believe that fully adequate answers to problems can be found by fully democratic means, provided the means are chosen with patience, sincerity and competence. But if this is not so, and if the choice is truly limited to a chaotic and anarchic democracy which only spells ruin, and an authoritarian alternative which truly delivers the goods and not an illusion thereof then we have no choice but to accept the latter. But as I said I do not believe this is the only choice.

The second scenario is that the present leadership, whether in existing or future combinations will not prove to be competent enough to deliver the goods by democratic means and therefore will reach out for more power by undemocratic means. I reject that as well and for the reason that there are enough people among the top leaders who would recognise the following facts, which are also borne out by their own experiences of not so long ago. First, no one is expecting miracles from them. Sincere efforts, and policies guided by basic common sense and minimum social justice, will keep them in power for a long time to come since they are not likely either to brawl in public (as the Janata leaders did) or fail to project well whatever they are able to do.

Second, their overwhelming majorities in Parliament and the State Assemblies have already given them, and by purely democratic means all the powers they need for the objective stated above. What they need to do for the effective use of this power is also not very complicated, as I discussed in my "The limits of Charisma". (SUNDAY, May 4, 1980)

Third, thanks to the historic and nation-serving judgment by the Supreme Court, they cannot now do anything very drastic with the Constitution for enhancing their power. Fourth, while they can push aside the Supreme Court judgment and the Constitution and plunge headlong into authoritarian power to successfully manage such power they will need much more talent than they need for the achievement of the goals mentioned above within the limits of

the presently available democratic and legitimate framework of power.

If authoritarian power is again assumed and squandered away again for lack of required talent, the retribution, when it comes, will be much more severe than in 1977. Thanks to the increased homogeneity and consolidation of the power of the electorate since 1977. These may seem fanciful hopes. But they are probably less fanciful than the two scenarios of doom.

A check on Mrs Gandhi



MGR beside Anna's statue

PREPARATIONS for an impressive birthday-cum-felicitation rally on June 3 in Madras city were called off as soon as the election results started trickling in. For Karunanidhi's friends and admirers the rally would have meant something memorable: there was not the slightest doubt in their minds that their Kalaignar (World poet) would be sworn as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on that day. But instead of a birthday gift Karunanidhi got perhaps the rudest shock of his life: not only did the DMK-Congress (I) alliance get only 69 seats but he himself could not win with an impressive margin. And the ousted Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran's AIADMK not only won an impressive 129 seats but also helped its allies like the CPI and the CPI(M) capture 33 seats. The Puratchi Nadigar (Revolutionary actor) had certainly crushed the Kalaignar.

Said MGR: "The election results have just proved what I have been saying ever since the results of January 1980 elections were announ-

ed. My Party got only two seats then whereas the Congress (I)-DMK alliance took the rest of the seats. The Parliamentary election was held to establish a stable Government at the Centre and people knew only Mrs Gandhi could do it. Since the DMK was allied with her it was natural it could win impressively but when Karunanidhi asked for my resignation, I had stoutly maintained that the Parliamentary election was not a referendum on the state's politics. Even then I had emphasised that just like the way people had voted for a stable Government at the Centre, they would vote for me in the Assembly election as they knew only my Party could provide them with a clean and stable Government".

MGR's spectacular victory was by no means a minor achievement. Since his Government was dismissed in March, everything seemed to be going against him. Several of his Ministerial colleagues left him: including K. Manoharan who was one of the founding members of the Party and P. T. Saraswathi who had once tattooed her arm with the Party flag. The

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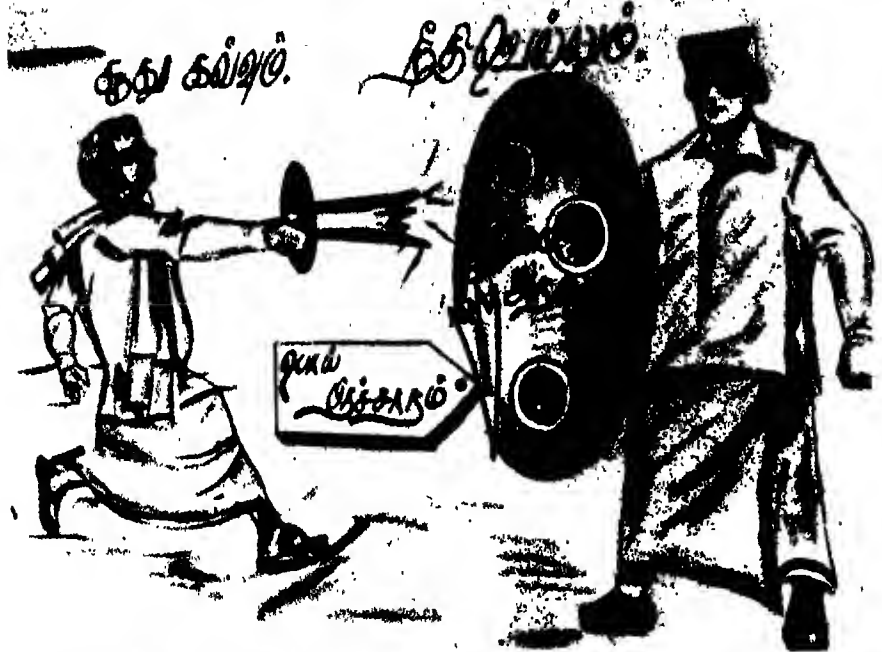
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EAG987/47 AC-4

Income Tax sleuths were after him. Industrialists and moneybags looked away when the Party bags were produced before them. They generously filled the Party coffers of DMK and Congress (I) instead. His political movie *Idhudhan En Badil* (This is my answer) was abandoned after some initial work. His ten electoral allies kept quarrelling with him, demanding more seats: the Janata Party which asked for 60 seats and got the offer instead of 46 walked out of the alliance calling MGR a megalomaniac (it won only two seats, though). The Marxist leaders often complained that by making them wait MGR had treated them like prospective film producers who had come to ask for "dates". A few days before the election MGR was heard saying that if he was defeated in the election he would go back to films and that he might even quit politics. DMK papers used this statement as a confession of MGR's own premonition of defeat. Calling him a coward, Karunanidhi had quipped: "Defeat in politics is nothing new or unusual. Annadurai, Kamaraj and Mrs Gandhi all tasted defeat but they did not quit politics".

During this "gloomy" period, however, MGR did his homework well. He addressed an average of six meetings per day and though he turned up very late, often 11 hours late, the crowd was mollified by the screening of his vintage hits. In between the screening his recorded speeches and songs from his films were played. He also came up with impressive announcements: If corruption charges against him were proved he would end his life. "I am not an economics pundit", he told educated urban voters. "But I know what poverty is, what deprivation is. When I returned from school, there used to be only water for lunch for days on end. I know what it means to climb the steps of four-storeyed buildings only to be told at the top, there is no vacancy. So it is my endeavour to wipe out the tears of poverty from the faces of my mothers throughout Tamil Nadu". Promises were made. If the DMK had promised free Mangala sutras and the Congress (I) a dole of Rs 50 to the unemployed, MGR went around promising sugar at one rupee per kilo and a radical reduction in the price of rice. MGR also had several digs at Karunanidhi's alleged soft attitude towards the imposition of Hindi. "He is even saying 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' in a Hindi accent", quipped one of MGR's followers and wall posters showing Karunanidhi studying Hindi were put up in many parts of Tamil Nadu.

The number of meetings addressed by matinee idol Sivaji Ganesan on behalf of the DMK and the Congress (I) did receive excellent patronage but then MGR, though out of movies for nearly three years, drew bigger crowds. "His popularity is made out of a phenomenon created by his films: this is correct to a certain extent", writer-director P. A. Neelakantan had once remarked, "but surely people welcome his progressive policies and concern for the downtrodden". Though *Idhudhan En Badil* remained an un-



Pro-MGR poster in Madras

born child despite the Herculean efforts of P. A. Neelakantan, K. Shankar and other friendly directors, not less than two dozen old MGR starrers were released. In Madras city alone a dozen MGR films were shown during election week, and attendance was above average. Some of the exhibitors allege that a little pressure was put on them not to release the films but they declared they were apolitical and offered to screen films starring Sivaji Ganesan as well as those scripted by Karunanidhi in the morning and noon shows.

The DMK-sponsored Press had hoped that corruption charges against MGR would impress the electorate. Some of them even published that MGR had disclosed Rs 78 lakhs of unaccounted wealth during the Emergency. MGR, on the other hand, accused Karunanidhi and his colleagues of unbridled corruption and nepotism as proved by the Sarkaria Commission. Seeking to explain his tax problems, MGR advised his colleagues in the film industry to be careful with their expenditure, to note down every bill and also account for their donations. "I gave away great amounts of money without maintaining the proper records and see the complications I am in", he said.

One of the significant reasons for the swing of public sympathy in MGR's direction may be the dismissal of his 30-month-long Ministry. "All of a sudden he became the martyr and the mask of the innocent victim suited him rather well", remarked a confidant of Karunanidhi. Another contributory factor is the relaxation of Prohibition. A few days before his dismissal MGR had brought down the permit fee for consuming liquor from Rs. 100 to Rs.

25 and had announced that anyone above 30 could get a permit without producing a medical certificate. "Prohibition will not be lifted totally", said MGR while addressing the first Pressmeet after the elections. "However a liberalised prohibition policy announced by my Government prior to the dismissal would be implemented".

His Government would cooperate fully with the Central Government, he added and clarified his statement by saying that such a cooperation in a federal set-up as India's was inevitable. This kind of talk would surely upset the Leftist Parties who have been calling his 11-Party alliance an anti-authoritarianism alliance.

Even before MGR was sworn in as the Chief Minister, a lot of bickering was evident in the DMK-Congress (I) "Progressive Front". DMK leaders were whispering that their Party suffered due to the bad performance of the Congress (I) at the Centre whereas the Congress (I) leaders said that the DMK won 20 Parliamentary seats in January only because of its alliance with Mrs Gandhi. However both Parties maintained that the alliance would continue. But then a solid effort is being made by influential journalists and politicians like Manian to bring the AIADMK and Congress (I) and isolate the Left Parties from MGR. "Our support to MGR was conditional and we would watch every one of his moves before we decide to support him on issues. That's why even before the election, we had made clear that we will not seek to be partners in his Government", said P. Ramamurthy of CPI.

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

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S/BS/L/85/80

Disappearance of the Janata island

MAHARASHTRA had to be different. Not different like Tamil Nadu, but different all the same. It deprived the Congress (I) of the two-thirds majority which it got in States other than Tamil Nadu. The Congress (I) had expected a minimum of 200 seats and a maximum of 250. In fact Mr Vitthalrao Gadgil, MP, and others had said: "We would not be surprised" if the Congress (I) tally goes upto 250 of the 288 seats.

The optimism was not without basis. In the Lok Sabha elections they won 39 of the 48 seats and led in 205 of the 288 Assembly segments. However, they could win only 184 seats this time and the percentage of votes polled came down from 54 per cent to 44 per cent on a rough estimate. Their most spectacular performance was in Bombay where they got 26 of the 34 seats, demolishing the Janata island, and in Vidarbha where they hold supreme with 55 out of the 68 seats in the region.

Behind this lag in expectations and the 184 seats eventually won, are two main factors. One helped the Congress (U) not only to work up a tally of 47 seats but increase its percentage of votes polled roughly from 10 per cent in the Lok Sabha polls to 27 per cent. A factor which contributed most was the policy decision of 12, Willingdon Crescent to "cut the Marathas to size". In doing so they gave tickets to only 80 Marathas when in 'normal' times the Marathas got nearly 80 per cent of the tickets. Nearly two-thirds of the voters are Marathas. The Marathas suiked, not the least of them being Mr Vasant-

dada Patil who forms one end of the trinity that "controls" or provides the political and economic leadership to the community. The other two are Sharad Pawar, the former Chief Minister and now leader of the opposition.

This was used to advantage by Mr Pawar and Mr Chavan who appealed for votes on the basis of Maratha chauvinism. In fact the response they got to the tears they shed for the Marathas were sought to be eclipsed by Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi. This enthused them so much that Mr Pawar said towards the end of the campaign, that had they known of this response they would have fought all the 288 seats, instead of just 190. In the Congress (U) camp there were 110 Marathas among the 190 candidates. This paid dividends because in the predominantly Maratha areas they got most of their seats — in 10 out of 26 districts.

It is also said that 10 of the 12 independent candidates who sought election as rebel candidates were Marathas. This proves the extent to which the Maratha sentiment dominated the voting pattern in certain areas. That many of them may join the Congress (I) cannot be ignored, because it is possible that Mr Vasantdada Patil, if properly mollified by 12, Willingdon Crescent may be able to win them over. Another factor that halted the Congress (I) crossing the 200 mark was inter-Party quarrels. A large number of Congressmen were upset that absolute newcomers to the Party were given tickets and many of them, therefore, worked for the defeat of these "new loyalists" as they were dubbed.

This was most apparent in the Congress (I)'s failure to get even a single seat in Beed district which has seven Assembly constituencies. Loyal Congressmen were peeved that Mr Sundarrao Solanke was given a ticket just because he crossed on the eve of the elections with four other Congress (U) legislators. They allegedly worked for his defeat. Mr Baburao Kale, another Congress (I) candidate and a strong contender for the Chief Ministership was defeated because the local Congressmen of Mr S. B. Chavan's group were said to have worked against him.

The Congress (I)'s spectacular performance in Bombay where it could win only one seat in the Lok Sabha election can be attributed partly to the image of Mrs Gandhi and partly to the alliance with the Shiv Sena. The Congress (I) also scored because of the low percentage of voting in Bombay. Bombay registered only 37 per cent voting and in several areas it was even lower. It may be mentioned that some "credit" for this low voting goes to an exciting university theatre group called "Aanaan". Blue-eyed Nilam Karnik of this group says that they put up more than a dozen performances of their street plays calling for a boycott of the elections. These street plays at the V. T. station, dock areas, working class areas and the suburbs of Thane and Bhamburda drew huge crowds and when the police tried to disperse the actors and actresses the crowds demanded that they be allowed to continue. The short plays showed greedy politicians of all hues making promises and after they won, all they did was exploit the people. "We told the people that water, housing, electricity were mere promises and that they could get nothing without a struggle. They could not change their lives through the ballot box and had to struggle".

The Shiv Sainiks, who were geared up in the course of the campaign with promises that they would be given Rajya Sabha representation if the Congress (I) came to power, gave up their earlier sullen postures at not being able to put up their own candidates, and worked for the Congress (I). Their votes and those of the slumdwellers tilted the scales in favour of the Congress (I). Added to this was the fact that the old Janata votes were divided between the Janata (JP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in about six constituencies. Congress (I) candidates could get by with barely a 3,000 vote margin and in Malabar Hill, Balwant Desai scraped through with a meagre margin of 890 votes.

The Congress (I) no doubt is in a very comfortable position in the State but the Party leaders have to be careful since there is no saying when a group of Congressmen may cross over if they feel neglected. Mr Sharad Pawar did that in 1978 and brought down the Congress-Congress (I) coalition government. Till 12, Willingdon Crescent gets complete control much will depend on the new Chief Minister.

OLGA TELLIS, Bombay

Bombay street play



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Credibility gaffe

Minister of State for Industries causes confusion

THE three-day, maiden, foreign visit of the Minister of State for Industry, Dr Charanjit Chanaana, in May was a remarkable one. Not only did it create unnecessary embarrassment between India and Indonesia, but also between two Ministries of the Government of India. "New chapter opens in Indo-Indonesian technical and economic co-operation" said the eight-page official handout issued on May 13 after the Minister returned from Indonesia.

It was a new chapter indeed. Dr Chanaana promised Indonesia iron ore pellets from a non-existent project. Here is what the official handout said: "The Indian side indicated that due to certain changes in the situation prevailing in India it would also be possible to supply pellets for P. T. Krakatau Steel earlier than what was envisaged in the supply from the Bailadila plant by arranging such supplies from the Kudremukh project. The pelletising plant at Kudremukh is in an advanced stage of completion and supplies of pellets could begin in 1980."

While this was what the Minister said, no firm decision had been taken to set up a pelletisation plant based on Kudremukh Iron ore concentrate. From all accounts, the Minister was briefed properly before his departure to Indonesia. Either he did not complete his homework or did not understand the briefing. Hence his gaffe. When some newspapers pointed out this slip there was no immediate response from the Industry Ministry. Four days later the Ministry issued a clarification which said that "pending completion of the facilities as part of the Kudremukh project the supply of pellets has been arranged from Pale plant and the joint sector plant at Goa." The Pale plant had been put up by Chowgules which company also has an interest in the joint sector plant. Thus the Industry Ministry itself had to confirm that the pellets will not be supplied from the Kudremukh project—which the official Press note had said "is in an advanced stage of completion"—thus virtually contradicting the Minister and what had been included in the protocol signed between the two countries.

How such a mistake occurred, no one is willing to say. Dr Chanaana visited Indonesia between May 8 and 10. A meeting was held to brief him on May 4. At this briefing, there was no mention of pellets being supplied from the Kudremukh project. Where the Minister got his idea from, it is difficult to say. Even the written brief, according to Industry Ministry

sources, does not mention anything about pellets from Kudremukh. All the adverse publicity resulting from this gaffe naturally was not relished by Dr Chanaana.

In fact, the office of the Minister of Steel and Mines is only one corridor away from that of the Minister of State for Industry. Instead of quietly sorting out the confusion created after the mistake had been acknowledged the Industry Ministry sought to resolve the problem in its own independent way. A representative of the Chowgules was called to hale out the Government. But the Chowgules have their own problem. The Pale pellet plant—which is completely export-oriented—has remained closed for the past two months due to lack of power. Production from the other joint sector pellet plant has been committed to Japan for the next ten years. If pellets from there have to be diverted to Indonesia, the agreement with Japan will have to be changed.

Moreover, the Industry Ministry has apparently proposed to move about 1.5 million tonnes of iron ore concentrates a year from Kudremukh and convert it into pellets at the two plants in Goa. The problems re-

lating to transport of this quantum of concentrate and the price at which it is supplied to the two plants, among other things, have yet to be resolved. Only after all these relevant points are settled can a firm date be given to Indonesia about commencement of pellet supplies. Notwithstanding all these unresolved issues, a spokesman of the Industry Ministry has stated that "As a result of arrangements" made obviously with the Goa plants, "450,000 tonnes of pellets per annum will be available for shipment to Indonesia beginning the last quarter of 1980." One has to wait and see whether shipments begin on time or not.

Dr Chanaana, meanwhile, was considerably embarrassed by the publicity. Some scapegoat had to be found and the target seems to be a joint secretary in the Ministry of Steel and Mines—an IAS officer with a clean record. Dr Chanaana has written to Mr Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for Steel and Mines, reportedly seeking action against the officer. According to informed sources in Udyog Bhavan, Dr Chanaana was advised against writing the letter to Mr Mukherjee. But he chose not to listen to this for his own reasons. At the time of writing this article (May 29), reports are that word has come from higher quarters suggesting that Mr Pranab Mukherjee just ignored the letter, thus closing the sorry episode.

S. C. ANANTHARAMAN,
New Delhi

How question papers are bought and sold

Higher Secondary examinees will face the consequences

WHAT can one say about our flourishing academic mafia which adds a new feather to its cap each year? Volumes. But words can offer no solace to 150,000 unfortunate Higher Secondary examinees of West Bengal whose examinations were postponed following large-scale leakage of question papers. After the leakage was discovered "officially" on Monday May 19, the examination in one paper was cancelled in Calcutta centres and examinations in the remaining subjects were postponed in all centres of West Bengal by about a month.

This year's Higher Secondary examinations began on May 10 with a record number of 150,000 examinees spread over 493 centres

in West Bengal. Even as the examinations began, there were rumours that questions of certain subjects had leaked out. On May 15, some examinees received a set of questions which tallied with the actual English paper-2 of May 16. Others say that the questions had leaked out in the first week of May itself.

One student who preferred to remain anonymous told SUNDAY: "On May 1, a friend handed me the questions for English paper-2. I worked out the answers and committed them to heart. The 'suggested' essay was: 'Effects of television on our life'. The actual question paper which we got on May 16 in the examination hall proved to be an exact copy of what

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my friend had given me on May 1. You will find it hard to believe that most of us knew the unseen passage which we were supposed to summarise in precis form. On Thursday, May 15, I saw the questions for English paper-2 being openly sold at Gariahat for Rs 15".

By Friday (May 16) evening, most examinees knew that questions were being leaked. But the officials of the West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary Education simply refused to believe it. When the Council's president, Mrs Anila Devi, was contacted by reporters on Friday (May 16), she said: "The Council has not received any reports as yet. It might be a fact that some of the questions expected by the students clicked". She also said that the Council had received no report about the sale of question papers. Newspaper offices in the city however received numerous calls from students and guardians pointing out the leakage.

The climax came on Sunday, May 18, when a number of questions for Monday's physics paper-I were mysteriously leaked out. Students and teachers of different colleges rang up newspaper offices and read out specific questions of the physics paper-I. Students waited in suspense for the Council's decision.

Besides Mrs Anila Devi, Mr Nirupam Som, Calcutta's new Commissioner of Police, also had to face reporters and guardians of students who wanted to know more about the leakage and the action being planned against those responsible. But nobody knew who the culprits were. Since the police were not officially informed about the leakage until Monday (May 19), Mr Som made a request to all newspaper offices for copies of leaked questions. The Statesman obliged Mr Som with a list of seven questions. Since it was alleged that the first "scene" of the leakage "drama" was enacted within the premises of Bhowanipore Education Society, Mr Som instructed the Bhowanipore police station to investigate. (Bhowanipore Education Society is in the jurisdiction of this thana.)

Finally, at a hurriedly convened Press conference on Monday (May 19) evening Mrs Anila Devi announced that the questions of the physics paper-I had been leaked out before the examination. She told reporters that on Sunday (May 18) evening a female student had handed her a copy of the leaked questions of physics paper-I. It was only after the physics examination began on Monday that she could verify the extent of the leak. Mrs Devi found that the copy given to her earlier tallied "from A to Z" with questions set by the Board. At the same Press conference she announced that the examination in



physics paper-1 had been cancelled at Calcutta centres because of the leakage. Simultaneously, the remaining examinations scheduled from Tuesday (May 20) were postponed to June 16 in all centres throughout the state.

To most students, the news of the postponement came as a shock. Though there has been no organised opposition to the Council's decision, the students are in an angry mood. Said Manoj Saunik of St Xavier's school: "The postponement of the examination has completely upset my plans. I wanted to join a college in Delhi. The academic year for Delhi University starts in mid-July. My results would hopefully come out in October. So I have no option but to either sit idle for a year and join Delhi University in 1981 or enrol myself in Calcutta University and rot for another four years".

The Council believes that the leak was confined to a few centres, mostly in south Calcutta: Bhowanipore Education Society, Gandhi Memorial Balika Vidyalaya, Maulana Azad college, Charu Chandra college and St Lawrence school. The students however beg to differ. Their contention is simple: once questions are leaked out it is impossible to ascertain the extent of the leak. Even if a handful of examinees get hold of leaked questions, they are passed around for the benefit of others. Some students have therefore demanded that the physics examination in all the centres must be cancelled. Teachers too have thrown their weight behind the students' demand.

AS soon as the leakage was officially confirmed, Calcutta Police swung into action. The Police Commissioner, Mr N. Som, entrusted the task of booking the culprits to the Detective Department (DD). On 21. 5. 80, the DD registered a case (number 284) at the Park Street Police station. (No police investigation can start until a case is registered at a thana.) Mr A. R. Khan, the DD chief assigned Mr S. D. Sarkar, an Assistant Commissioner to probe the leakage.

Mr Sarkar who has an outstanding record in the police service began by interrogating a number of Higher Secondary examinees. He eventually came across one student who had bought the questions. This student guided Mr Sarkar to the person who had sold the questions. The seller was Nabaran Roy, a Higher Secondary examinee who lived in Manoharpukur in south Calcutta. But Nabaran was not at home. When he returned, he was taken to Ballygunge police station where Mr Sarkar interrogated him from 12.30 a.m. to 6 a.m. in the morning. A frightened Nabaran finally confessed that he had peddled the questions among a number of examinees.

But how did Nabaran get the question papers? He purchased it from Bidhu Majumdar, who until a few years ago lived in Manoharpukur but later migrated to Delhi in search of a job. In Delhi, Bidhu earned his living as an autorickshaw driver.

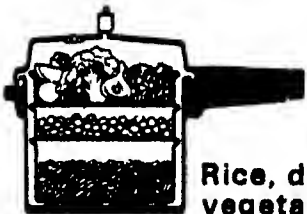
On Saturday, May 24, inspectors N. Ganguly, P. Ghosh and U. S. Lahiri flew to Delhi. There they found out that one of Bidhu's sisters was married to Jivan Singh who worked for Pearl Offset press situated in Kritinagar, Delhi. The question papers for physics, chemistry and mathematics were printed at this press. Bidhu managed to elude the police but Jivan Singh was in Delhi. He confessed that he had brought out the question paper and handed it to Bidhu. The police party returned to Calcutta along with Jivan Singh. A case was immediately instituted against the three accused persons. The court will soon announce its verdict. The police theory is that Jivan Singh gave the questions to Bidhu Majumdar who came down to Calcutta and sold it to Nabaran Roy and a few other persons. Robin Majumdar (Bidhu's brother) and Vijayraj Singh (Jivan Singh's brother) who had agreed to help the police discovered that Bidhu was hiding in Mathura. He was promptly arrested and handed to Shadara police station in Delhi. Delhi Police later handed Bidhu to the DD officers of Calcutta Police.

In the light of the recent leakage, a thorough review of the working of the West Bengal Council for Secondary Education is necessary. Only last year, the Higher Secondary examination had to be postponed at the eleventh hour—two days before the scheduled date of commencement. The reason: admit cards were not ready!

S. N. M. ABDI, Calcutta

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MCA-TT-55

The tailed baby

Was it a freak happening?

MRS RANU BHATTACHARYA, 30-year-old mother of a newly born baby would have been shocked beyond measure had she found out that her otherwise healthy son was born with a tail, on the afternoon of May 28, 1980. However, the doctors of the Ramakrishna Mission Sava Pratishthan Hospital, Calcutta kept it a secret from the mother, at least for the first couple of days.

With a diameter of half an inch at the root and a fifth of an inch at the tip, the three-inch tail grew from the coccyx, the end-bone of the vertebral column, and was free from any skeletal elements. "It does not seem to be a voluntary organ," said a bewildered physician for, apparently, "the boy did not respond to ordinary physical stimulus on that part of the body."

While such an incident had no precedence: neither in the hospital's history nor in the experience of the doctors present, opinion seems to be divided over the cause of such a phenomenon. According to one view, the malformation is not an impossibility. Embryos of all vertebrates are known to develop tails. In the case of a human being the "embryonic tail" begins to grow in the fourth

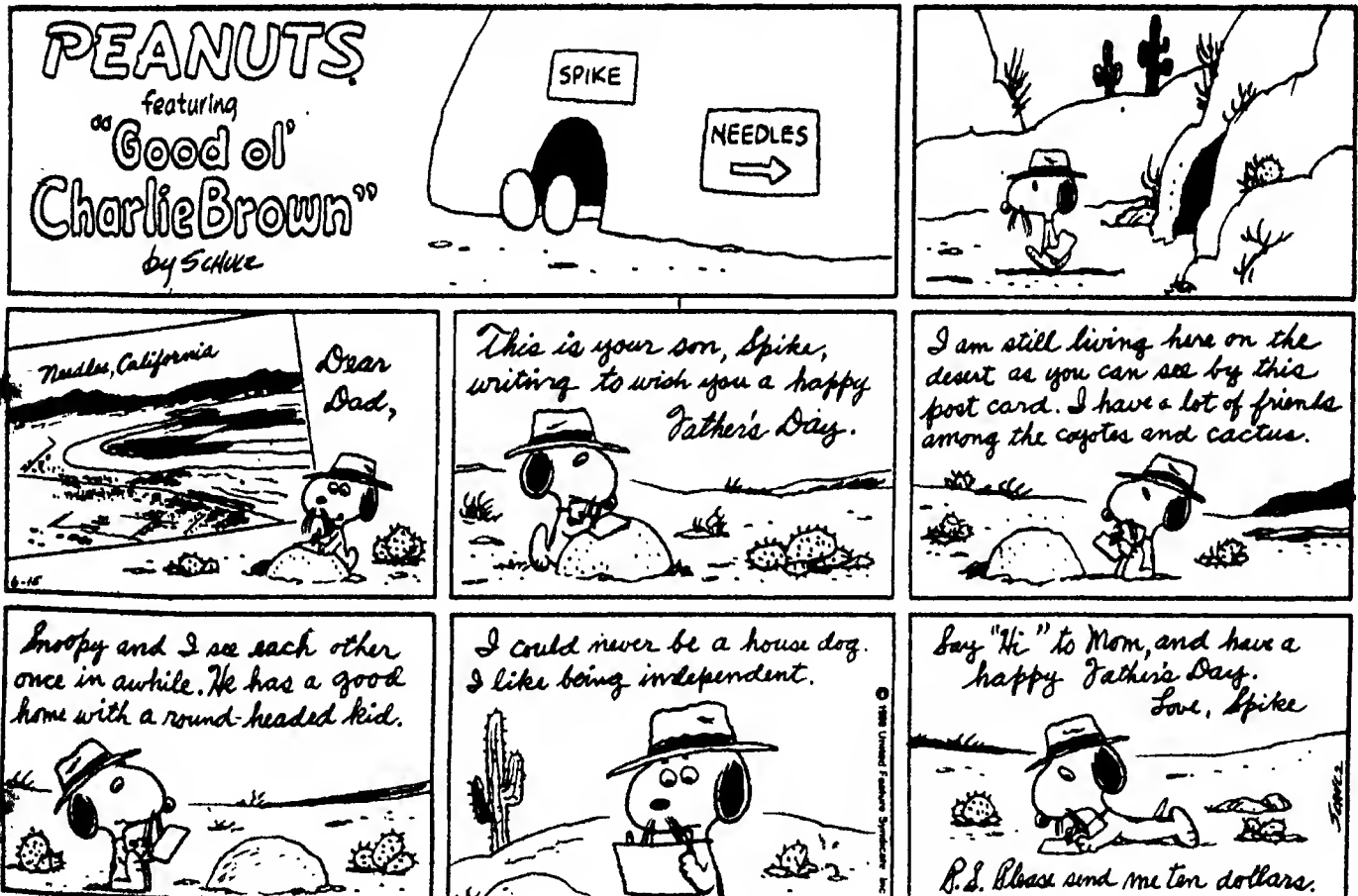


week of pregnancy and attains a maximum length by the end of the fifth week. Thereafter the tail begins to regress and by the time the child is born, it is almost nonexistent. However, the tail can remain visible, as has happened in this case, if the regression stage is missed during pregnancy: an occurrence which is accidental and cannot be prevented as such.

The alternate view links the phenomenon with hormonal and/or genetic imbalances. Thyroid hormones are known to help other vertebrates get rid of their tails, and physiologists do not rule out the possibility that a deficiency of the hormone in a pregnant woman's system may cause her to give birth to an infant with a tail. Such a malformation can therefore be prevented by giving the expectant mother the proper medication.

And how has the family of the baby boy reacted? Initially, one of shock. Close relations frantically urged the journalists to keep the names of the parents a secret. However, when it was realised that the occurrence was not so uncommon after all and had happened in Western countries, the tension relaxed. After the parents had given their consent for removing the tail, a team of doctors operated upon the freak child on Wednesday, June 11. The five-centimetre-long tail was removed.

PATHIK GUHA, Calcutta



KHAAS BAAT



Amitabh - dating Mehra

MRS DUTT — the Nargis of yesteryear whose affair with *Raj Kapoor* many years ago had generated a lot of steam in the Press — has not quite forgotten her detractors. After she was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, several parties were hosted in her honour. But Mrs Dutt made a condition to her hosts: she would attend only if the Press was kept out. She attended the parties and, as expected, there were no newshounds around.

THE RED ROSE has had a good bit of smooth sailing — through the censor board to the screens in cinema houses. And no one seems to have raised any objections to this film. To begin with, Mr K. L. Khandpur, chairman of the Central Board of Film Censors, played the combined roles of the proverbial Three Monkeys: he saw, spoke and heard nothing. So the cans went to the examining panel of the Board which, eventually, took no decision; the regional officer, who was supposed to cast a decisive vote, chickened out at the last minute. Then, the revising committee took up the matter and also played it safe — its chairman refused to cast his vote. The circle was completed when the Board received the film again and the good deed was done when the film was passed unscathed.

THE "tall story" is full of high tension drama and subtle diplomacy. Amitabh Bachchan is no longer what

he was a year ago. After parting company with *Salim Javed*, the star has been feeling quite unsure of his ratings in the celluloid bazaar. So what does he do? He studies his graph and then decides that *Prakash Mehra* is his only saviour. While six consecutive Amitabh-starrers did just about moderate business in the last year, it was Mehra's *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* which turned out to be a fantastic money-spinner. So now Amitabh has turned to *Prakash Mehra*. In doing so, he has

to do a bit of patching up with the producer-director. He had initially stalled quite a few of the latter's productions by not giving him shooting dates but Amitabh has now allotted dates in bulk to *Prakash Mehra*.

RAJA ROY, brother of *Reena Roy* and *Barkha*, was scheduled to leave for the UAE to attend a show in which his sisters were participating. Before he went he spoke to a friend of his, a Customs employee, about the advisability

Reena Roy tripping in UAE



of bringing back certain items. He was apparently warned to stay far from *Kishore Kumar* and on no account to return with him, the reason being that Customs men are allergic to him. And naturally, if the Customs are harsh with *Kishore* on arrival at Santa Cruz, they have to mete out the same treatment to others on the same flight.

IS the monopoly of the *Mangeshkar maharajis* at last coming to an end? Neither of them figured in *Qurbani*, *Feroz Khan's* forthcoming film, the song of which have already become famous long before the picture's release. Then there was the case of *Raj Grover*, producer of *Taagat* who wanted to record a song for a movie of his. He had assigned it to *Asha Bhonsle* and had paid her all dues in advance. All was set for the recording, the musicians were assembled but at the last moment a message from the singer said she would be unable to do the recording due to a throat affliction. Nothing new, that. So *Raj* did the only other thing possible: he arranged for another singer and recorded the song without delay.

PRICES are going up. And so are the prices of stars. Amitabh's is of course by far the highest, but the question is: who comes next on the list? *Jeetendra*, *Rajesh Khanna*, *Rishi Kapoor* or *Shatrughan Sinha*? One thing's for sure — each of them wants to be number 2. *Jeetu* started charging as much as 15 lakhs, I hear, and *Rishi* followed suit soon after with his success in the movie *Sargam*.

SO *Shatrughan Sinha* at last begun to acknowledge the existence of *Komal*, whom he plans to marry. She gave up her career, which never did take off, for his sake. However, *Shatru* did not marry her in the interim because he wanted to establish his own career, which is still neither here nor there. *Komal* is busy completing her graduation, which is a condition of *Shatru's* prior to marriage. To demonstrate his love for her, he reportedly presented her with a diamond ring. And, according to one of the dealers, the ring is one of the costliest in the film world.

YEARS ago Savitri, the falling superstar threw another falling star Gemini Ganesh, then known as Kadal Masan, out of her house. Gemini, fully soured and upset, refused to move out of Savitri's house. But Savitri, who was in an equally inebriated mood was fearful of her falling fortune. She was afraid that her lover's bad luck would further affect her own future. The dejected actor continued to have more flings, some pleasant and some unpleasant. And Savitri tried her hand at direction. She failed miserably, and took to alcohol in a most uninhibited way. Between heavy drinking and nursing hangovers she also did character roles in two dozen films. Gemini Ganesh, whose career came to a standstill went on a reconciliation spree. He made peace with his mistress Pushpalalli and daughters Rekha and Radha, called back his wife and started living with her. Since then he hardly met Savitri though his friends believe that he sent money regularly to her as the heavy drinking brought a money lender to her palatial house. Diamonds and imported cars were then hawked as if it was nobody's business. In the last week of May, Savitri lay in an unconscious state at Bangalore Bowring Hospital. The producer who had her admitted there was getting panicky as he had to shell out heavy sums to treat Savitri's multiple ailments. When Gemini Ganesh heard this sad story he made immediate arrangements to bring Savitri to Madras, and despite his financial problems had her admitted in one of the best nursing homes. As she was hovering between life and death, the ageing actor was going through anxious moments. Who says chivalry is dead?

MADRAS was in the grip of excitement on the eve of the release of two Tamil films *Guru* and *Kali*. Both are directed by Kerala's F. V. Sasi: the former stars Kamalabasan who's going through a bad patch right now, and Seema. So you can imagine his anxiety. In *Kali*, Rajnikant is in the title role opposite Seema. Apart from minor rivalry between Kamalabasan and Rajnikant, many more

KHAAS BAAT

egos are involved in the success or failure of these films. Though Sasi is the common director, he's accused of showing more interest in *Kali*. This is understandable as *Kali's* script is written by the writer J. Mahendran whereas *Guru* is the Tamil version of a badly written Hindi hit *Jugnu*.

AN interesting development has taken place in South Indian films during the last decade. A star having a bad time in one South language tries his/her luck in another and finds warm welcome there. And this kind of star migration continues even today. When actress Sujatha failed to stage a comeback in Tamil films soon after her marriage, she did a couple of Malayalam films but she couldn't achieve much in Kerala. And then Telugu director Dasari Narayana Rao gave her roles in his two films. And now we hear Sujatha is harvesting rich returns in Andhra. Srividya is also having a great time in Kerala, and Sridevi is collecting as much by way of a star

price from Andhra producers as from Tamil ones.

MENAKA's maiden film *Ramayee Vayasukku* Vanitha performed the vanishing trick in the second week after its release. But she's in for better times. Director Bharatan has signed her for his first Tamil film which is a remake of his successful Malayalam film *Payanam*. In the original, Lakshmi played the role of a young woman who's married to an old man. Made more than a decade ago, the film contained a lot of sexy scenes, which could not emulate his more successful films like *Rathi Nirvedhan* and *Thakara*.

FOR last five years Roopa Chawda was looking around desperately for roles. Now she has a couple

of films on hand but it seems a sad thing that she is being used as a double in some of Shoba's incomplete films, in the long-shot sequences that is. The film is being titled *Samantha's Poo*.

PIOUSJI



Newcomer Mattika and Chandra Mohan in 'Nagamalli' a Telugu film

beginning June 15

This week the Sun, Mercury and Venus are conjoined in Gemini. Rahu alone is in Cancer, while Saturn, Mars and Jupiter are assembled in Leo. Uranus is in Libra, Neptune is in Scorpio and Kethu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Cancer, Leo and Virgo from Gemini.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20) A week of great success in business and finance is predicted. This may precede or follow an important change in life which might be a change in job or residence. Your domestic life will be a happy one. Check extravagant tendencies and pay great attention to business dealings. A happy romance is in the offing. A promotion is forecast. Good dates : 15, 16, 19 and 21. Lucky numbers : 3, 6 and 9. Favourable direction : South.



TAURUS (April 21 — May 22) This week is going to be a happy one. Routine matters progress well but be careful of friends who might try to swindle you. Try to avoid quarrels. You might have a difference of opinion with an older man. But do not worry, since this week is a lucky one. Promotions are in the offing and business will be good this week. Good dates : 16, 18, 20 and 21. Lucky numbers : 2, 4 and 7. Favourable direction : South-west.



GEMINI (May 23 — June 21) Romance is in the offing. This will bring joy to your life. You will gain through a secret association. Your personal life will proceed apace. There will be little sorrow or trouble in your career or domestic life. Be content with the slow progress you seem to be making. Be patient and tactful while dealing with elders or those in authority. A friend will help you. Good dates : 16, 17, 18 and 21. Lucky numbers : 1, 3 and 10. Favourable direction : North.



CANCER (June 22 — July 22) You will be less fortunate than last week. Try not to displease your superior or employer. Those in business will make good gains. An elderly person, however, will cause some trouble. There might be some minor domestic matters which might cause you some trouble but do not be impatient. Pay attention to business and take the advice of elders. Good dates : 17, 19 and 20. Lucky numbers : 4, 6 and 8. Favourable direction : West.



LEO (July 23 — August 22) The first half of the week will be rough as regards business and profession. The rest of the week will, however, bring happiness especially from the domestic front. You will gain from a new friendship or association. But be cautious. Times are not particularly favourable for matrimonial affairs. Do not gamble for high stakes. Good dates : 18, 20 and 21. Lucky numbers : 9, 10 and 11. Favourable direction : East.



VIRGO (August 23 — September 22) A very important week lies ahead of you. Some rapid developments in your field of work will take you out of town. For some the time is ripe for winning a lottery ticket. Those in service will receive a promotion. Be tactful with your partner this week. Good dates : 15, 16, 19 and 20. Lucky numbers : 2, 8 and 12. Favourable direction : South.



LIBRA (September 23 — October 22) Good fortune is coming your way. You will gain through romance, children and speculation. You may benefit unexpectedly. But you may be faced with opposition from an elderly person. Do not get entangled in litigation. Let not domestic or love affairs interfere with your business or financial affairs. Your health may need an extra care. Good dates : 19, 20 and 21. Lucky numbers : 2, 7 and 9. Favourable direction : West.



SCORPIO (October 23 — November 21) A mixed fortune is in the offing. You may be affected with secret matters of the heart. A sudden change is likely to enable you to consolidate your position and establish your life on a firm footing. Your business will prosper provided you make your intuition your guide. A new friend of the opposite sex will contribute to your happiness. If you are careful, luck will surely smile on you. Devote time to the family. Good dates : 15 and 21. Lucky numbers : 3, 6 and 9. Favourable direction : West and South.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 — December 22) Those in business will prosper. Your past work will be amply rewarded. Some of you might even be promoted or receive some form of recognition. Many will profit in matters of estate. Those in teaching will do well this week. A secret matter or love will bring joy and good fortune. Push your affairs to the utmost. Be tactful while dealing with partners. Good dates : 15, 17, 19 and 21. Lucky numbers : 1, 5 and 6. Favourable direction : South.



CAPRICORN (December 23 — January 20) Take a little care over routine business. There might be a minor disagreement after which it will be an easy and fruitful week. You will gain through the occult. Be patient while dealing with serious but unexpected obstacles which will crop up this week. Your health will be good. Good dates : 16, 18, 20 and 21. Lucky numbers : 4, 7 and 9. Favourable direction : East.

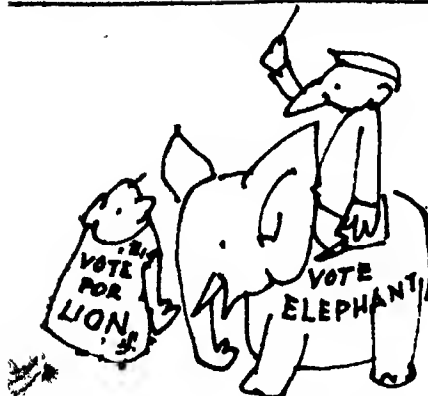


AQUARIUS (January 21 — February 19) This week once again your good fortunes will come from your own intuitions. Many will win promotions through their own hunches. Those in business will have successful business dealings. Elders will help you and many will gain some property. There might be unreasonable opposition from an elderly member of the family. Good dates : 15, 16, 19 and 20. Lucky numbers : 1, 9 and 10. Favourable direction : North.



PISCES (February 20 — March 20) This week will be an average one. This is the opportune time to begin any new undertaking. Make any changes in profession which you have been contemplating. Be tactful and you will probably avoid a lawsuit. Be guided by your own intuitions. Many will benefit from art, music and literature. A member of the opposite sex will certainly aid you. Your health will be good. Good dates : 18, 17, 19 and 20. Lucky numbers : 2, 4 and 7. Favourable direction : West.

M. B. RAMAN



COIMBATORE: The endurance feats of crazy N. Parthasarathy, who is contesting as an independent candidate, 'hopped' through the streets of Coimbatore, in a gunny bag covering 5 km in two hours. The sack covering him from foot to neck carried the slogan, 'Vote for the lion symbol'. Another candidate, Mr K. Arunan who has been allotted the "Elephant" symbol recently hired and rode an elephant during the canvassing. N. Parthasarathy, who has been allotted the symbol of "Lion" is sorry that he could not hire a lion—*Indian Express* (S. J. Jeyakaran, Coimbatore)

LJNOR: A young girl was married, divorced and remarried the same day, in village Bhaguwaia, 25 kms from here. The unusual drama took place when a bridegroom just after completion of 'nikah' (marriage ceremony) insisted that a photograph of his friends should be taken with the girls of bride's family. This was resented to by the parents of the bride leading to a divorce then and there. No sooner the marriage party packed up to return home without the bride, another young boy was selected from among the marriage party and the divorced bride was married again—*The Indian Nation* (Satish Prasad, Bhagalpur)

GWALIOR: An all-policemen gang of go-broits has been formed by a hostile police constable who looted the armoury of a rural police station in Gwalior district. Ram Babu Singh, a head constable, and three constables of Bhind district who were missing from duty, joined the hostile constable, Shiv Singh—*The Times of India* (Satyajit Chakravarty, Shillong)

PATIALA: An independent candidate was weighed against water melons. Mr Pirara Singh Kambo is now looking forward to being weighed against cucumbers. Another independent, Mr M. C. Bharadwaj was weighed against books written by Lala Hardayal, the famed scholar and revolutionary. Mr Tirth Chand, another independent was weighed against medicines. The Punjab Medicos Forum which did the weigh-

ing, said the medicines would be distributed among the poor—*The Hindustan Times* (Naresh Chunder, Jaipur)

BIJAPUR: A startling inconsistency in nature's ways was discovered lately—a goat has given birth to a human male child. In the train of all believe-it-or-not events, this too would perhaps find lots of sceptics, but local newsmen saw for themselves the "miracle child," whom the owner of the mother goat, Mr Mohammed, proudly exhibited and even obliged with a miniature discourse on human anatomy. The "baby" whose face, limbs, ears, mouth and tongue bore stark resemblance to a human male's measured 2.5 feet in length and weighed nine pounds, and was dead soon after it was born. The baby's twins—both thoroughly goat-like—are alive and kicking—*Deccan Herald* (L. Srinivasan, Bangalore)

BHADRACHALAM: An 18-year-old college girl, Sarada, while returning home after school was allegedly pushed into a well by some boys for not showing her answer paper for copying at an examination. However, the well being shallow, she escaped with some injuries and was admitted to hospital—*Nagpur Times* (N. Mohandas, Nagpur)

MYLAPORE: A body of a woman floating in the Kapaleeswarar tank for about three hours was dragged ashore by a group of local people. A policeman from the Mylapore station also arrived on the scene, when to the astonishment of onlookers, the woman opened her eyes and chided them for "disturbing" her meditation—*Indian Express* (A. Balagangadharan, Madras)

KOLAR: A 22-year-old boy has been admitted to the SNR District Hospital as the doctors believe 'him' to be pregnant. The patient suffers from a rare condition called 'hypertrophic clitoris'. The boy's mother naturally thought the baby to be a boy and brought him up as such. Lakshman considers 'himself' to be a boy only. When enquired about 'his' health, 'he' simply said 'he' was under treatment for some septic complications—*Indian Express* (P. Pattar, Bangalore)

COONDAPUR: As you are on the Nandodi ghat road, between Coondapur and Kollur, you see a grotesque sight of a man's body that has been hanging from a tree near the road, for nearly six months now. The spot is 45 miles from the town and nine km from Kollur. The Kollur citizens are aghast that nothing has happened to spare them from the horror. But the police are unable to act because none has complained about it. The long arm of law can stretch itself only when there is a complaint. There has been no complaint they say—*Deccan Herald* (R. Jambanna, Bangalore)

A STATE which holds the country to ransom to gain regional ends has, in effect, psychologically withdrawn from the Union—*The Statesman* on the situation in Assam

WE wanted to save it (oil), so that in future it would not be delivered to any foreign country—D. P. Barooah of the All Assam Students' Union on picketing oil pipelines

ONLY politicians of the ruling Party and Leftists have been indulging in inspired propaganda to create enmity among communities—Brij Sharma of the Assam Gan Sangram Parishad

SANJAY GANDHI is the hero of India's cultural revolution—Charanjit Chanana, Union Minister of State for Industry

RICHARD NIXON got the Sanjay sort of allegiance from his staff in his last days—and we all know what happened to him—Vinod Mehta in *Business India*

I HAVE no special interest in the Express building...And what, after all have I done? Even the construction has not stopped—Jagmohan, Delhi's Lt. Governor quoted in *Surya*

THE ruling Party has manipulated the results at the point of gun. Parliament has become increasingly irrelevant and will increasingly become so. Where then do we go from here?—Charan Singh's comment on the Congress(I) victory in the state Assembly elections

THE Indian intellectual is not only a definitional challenge, he is also a sociological puzzle—Bhabani Sen Gupta in *Contour*

THE Indian civil servants are being divided into dependable sheep and unreliable goats—Indar Malhotra in the *Sunday Review*

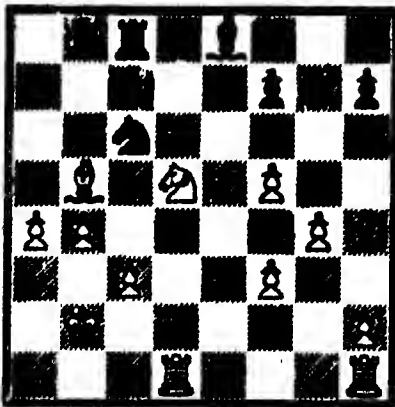
THE President of the French Republic does not need the permission of the President of the United States to go out of doors—French Foreign Minister, Jean Francois-Poncet quoted in *Time*

I HAVE no regrets being out of hockey considering that nowadays it is taken as seriously as Raj Narain—Aslam Sher Khan

WE always look for fresh young faces. How can you make a rape scene believable, for example, if your leading lady looks like she doesn't need any forcing at all—A Japanese blue moviemaker quoted in *Asiaweek*

chess

Vukic (Black)



Bronstein (White) to move
Position after Black's 24th move

Twenty-nine years ago David Bronstein challenged the great Mikhail Botvinnik for the championship of the world and tied the match 12-12, only to lose out to a regulation stating that in such an event the champion would retain his title. Today Bronstein is understandably more interested in the aesthetic than the competitive side of chess. Always ready to introduce innovation on or off the board he believes the modern game to be too scientific, too precise to allow a player to use his imagination freely. Speculative or unsound sacrifices are mercilessly punished by a good grandmaster under the present-day time control of 40 moves in 2½ hours. There is time to dissect and analyse, to find the minute flaw. One of his more mind-boggling ideas to free and expand the game is to play several games against the same opponent simultaneously. He recently had an exhibition match with the Armenian grandmaster Rafael Vaganian in which they played four games against each other (with clocks) at the same time, two with White, two with Black (it is fairer because nobody has the advantage of the first move). Just contemplating the idea made me feel a little dizzy, but one or two clear-headed readers might like to try it out.

But such experimentation is unnecessary, for as Bronstein himself shows the conventional game still offers boundless opportunities for creative play:

White: Bronstein. Black: Vukic.
Vrsac 1979. Sicilian Defence, Sveshnikov Variation.

1. P-K4, P-QB4; 2. N-KB3, P-K3; 3. P-Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N-KB3; 5. N-QB3, N-B3; 6. N(4)-N5, P-Q3; 7. B-KB4, P-K4; 8. B-N5, P-QR3; 9. N-R3, P-N4; 10. B x N, P x B; 11. N-Q5, P-B4; 12. N x P? Yet another of White's possibilities. In this position, maybe not entirely correct, but it does force Black to lay down his theoretical handbook and think.

13. P x N; 14. B x P, B-Q5; 15. P x P So White has three pawns for his piece, but no obvious plan of attack.

16. P-QN1; 17. P-QR4, Q-N4; 18. P-KN4, Q-R5! Not 16. P-R4? 17. P-R4!

17. Q-Q5, B-R3; 18. P-QB3, Q-O; 19. Q-N3! A move of great vision. White's pawns will become dangerous in the endgame.

19. B-N4 Trying to keep the blockade, but maybe 19. Q-N4 was better.

20. P-N4, K-R1; 21. Q x Q, B x Q; 22. Q-O-Q! Typical of Bronstein, playing on all parts of the board at the same time. If 22. B x P(B7) 23. N-B6.

23. KR-B1; 24. K-N2, K-N2; 25. P-B6, B-K17 Convinced that White is preparing an advance on the queenside, he forgets about the other half of the board. (DIA-GRAM) 26. P-N6! B x P; 27. KR-N1, K-R3; 28. P-R4! B-Q1; If 27. B x P 28. R-N4 and R-KR1 mating.
29. N-K3! Now he weaves a beautiful mating net. If 28. B-K2 then 29. P-B6! B x P; 30. N-B5+ K-R4; 31. B-K2 and P-KB4+ 29. K-R4; 29. P-B6! Again with mating ideas: 29. B x P; 30. R x P, B-K2; 31. N-B5, B x R; 32. R-N5 mate.
29. P/R3; 30. N-B5, B-Q2; 31. N-N7+ K x P; 32. R-Q2! Resigns. There is no defence to the threat of 33. R-R2+ B-R6; 34. R-N4 mate.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

Holding

♠ A K 6
♥ A 6 3
♦ Q 8
♣ A 10 9 8 4

your partner having opened the bidding with One Spade, you would be reasonably happy to double an overcall of Four Clubs. But wait! Better things are round the corner

Dealer North. E-W vulnerable.

♠ 9 7
♥ Q 8 7 4 2
♦ J 9 8 5 3 2
♣ —

♠ A K 4
♥ A 8 3
♦ Q 8
♣ A 10 8 6 4
N
W
E
S
♠ Q 10 8 6 4 2
♥ K J 8
♦ A K 7
♣ 5
♠ J 3
♥ 10 9
♦ 10 4
♣ K Q J 7 5 3 2

This was the bidding at one table in the match between Italy and North America in the qualifying round of the world championship:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Garozzo	Kantar	Lauria	Eisenberg
—	—	No	1♠
4♠	double	No	4♠
No	5♠	No	5♠
double(1)	5♥	No	5♠
7♠(2)	double	No	No
No	—	—	—

(1) Benito always likes to be in the game, on whatever pretext.

(2) Expecting to make six tricks and so save a few points.

But even Benito could make only four tricks. The penalty was 1700. The other table was exciting, too:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Goldman	De Falco	Soloway	Franco
—	—	No	1♠
3♠	double	No	4♠
No	5♠	double	No
No	redouble	No	6♠
No	5♥	No	6♠
No	7♠	No	6♠
No	—	—	—

This was one down when a club was led. West should have taken note of North's double of Five Clubs. What could it mean, but a void? 7NT, with the heart finesse right, could have been made.

The deal cost Italy 18 match points, and one must say that they asked for it.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Familiar Disney cartoon characters are featured on the first stamps of what is to be an omnibus issue totalling 24 series, all devoted to the work of Walt Disney. Eight countries are participating in the issue, which is being organised by a New York philatelic agency. The first eight series will show the characters in different contexts. The later series, to be released during the next two years, will illustrate Disney films. The Grenada series comprises 10 stamps showing the characters as sportsmen. On a series from Dominica and the Turks and Caicos Islands they are making music and taking a seaside holiday.

C. W. HILL

quiz

QUESTIONS

1. Apart from the study of tribals, what is tribology?
2. What type of an engine is a ram jet?
3. When would you be experiencing REM sleep?
4. When was the Polish October?
5. What are magic numbers?
6. In which religion would you find Invincible Ignorance?
7. What does IPA stand for?

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of the mago oimw eu jo
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4. In October 1988 when was
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of the simplest form.
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QUANTITY

THE WORLD

Zzzzz...

President Carter's new Secretary of State Edmund Muskie is a tired and harrowed man. Probably the Chief has been bothering him too much with shuttle diplomacy and much else. Recently, sleep caught up with him of all places in Austria, during a ceremony to mark Austria's 25th independence anniversary. While intellectuals and historians spoke about the history of Austria in the postwar years, Mr Muskie folded his arms across his chest, listened for a few minutes and just could not keep his eyes open. Resting his tired head in his chest he continued to sleep through discourses by former Vice Chancellor Fritz Bock and historian Gerald Stourzh, Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Sec-



Edmund Muskie

retary kept glancing at his American counterpart but just did not have the heart to wake him up. Later of course, the ex-Senator did wake up only to find that there was someone else who could keep him company if he wanted to doze off again: ex-British Prime Minister Mr Harold Macmillan.

Stresspoint!

Women executives are more prone to stress than men. This was revealed in a survey carried out by the Manchester University's Institute of Science and Technology. The major cause of their stress is discrimination. One hundred and eighty top women executives including directors and engineers were asked for the reasons of their stress and they said that their male colleagues had been promoted more rapidly than them. However, the women were more devoted to their work and wanted to be more successful. The stress therefore, would have effects on their health, both physical and mental. We do not know whether Indian women executives suffer from the same malaise their British sisters do.

Killing with chemicals

The war of the worlds is near and Britain seems to be in the midst of it. Recently the Company of the 2nd Royal Green Jackets put on their protective gear in the first ever chemical war exer-



AP

cise. The objective of the whole exercise was a purely defensive one. Meanwhile there is an argument going on among the other NATO powers whether the members of the alliance should go ahead with an offensive capability building up a systematic defense against chemical warfare.

The British forces seem well prepared to take any action if the Russians start using their huge stocks of nerve gases, blood agents and deadly chemicals. Every Green Jacket was issued with protective clothing which included boots, rubber gloves, a gas mask as well as a packet of sensitive paper which could detect and identify chemicals. In addition he was also supplied with Fuller's earth to "blot, bang and rub" any part of the clothing or kit which could be affected by the chemicals. Perhaps, as a warning to the members of the Warsaw Pact countries, the British Green Jackets will join Britain's Army of the Rhine later this year.

Helpmate

The two-worker American family system has struck its roots in the White House. Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan and Keke Anderson have decided not to let the limelight bother them, while they help their husbands with their office work. Rosalynn Carter who has already had some experience with Presidential office work earned for herself the name "Steel Magnolia" in the course of her Cabinet meetings. While Nancy Reagan does not think much of Cabinet meetings and would be satisfied projecting the image of a "supportive" and "disciplined" First Lady, Keke Anderson will happily remain an "equal partner".

Nancy Reagan



To crown it all



More than 30 guests at a charity dinner at London went without food because the fish for the main course ended up in the Buckingham Palace kitchens. A 26-pound sturgeon caught off the shores of Cornwall was purchased by a local hotelier. The hotelier offered the fish to the Queen in accordance with

the 650-year old law which states that the sturgeon is a royal fish and that royalty has the right to enjoy any caught in the British waters. Wasn't he surprised when the Queen said "Yes" to the offer! And may be a little disappointed too for the charity dinner had to be called off.

CENTRE OF STABILITY



Ghani Khan Choudhury

NOW that polling in the nine states is over, will the Centre turn its attention towards destabilising the CPI(M)-led Governments in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala? There seem to be two schools of thought within the Congress (I). One feels that Ghani Khan Choudhury's theory of "pushing the Marxists into the Bay of Bengal" should be implemented, while the other school advocates a policy of rapprochement. The CPI(M) leaders, particularly the ones in power, seem to be lending credibility to this school's views by their eager acceptance of the Congress(I)'s overtures on Assam. On the eve of the crucial meeting on Assam, a leading CPI(M) leader was asked whether he feared destabilisation by the Centre in the states ruled by his Party but he nonchalantly replied,

"She has bigger problems to tackle now". Apparently some sort of an agreement has been reached between Mrs Gandhi's Party and the Marxists. In the meantime, however, the "sack CPI(M)" camp is working overtime to persuade the leaders in New Delhi that an enquiry should be ordered into the "misdeeds" of the Left Front Government in West Bengal, which allegedly include "mismanagement" of the Food-For-Work Programme and the flood relief funds in 1978. The latest shot in this regard has been fired by Debaprasad Roy, the All-India Youth Congress (I) General Secretary from West Bengal, who has written a letter to the Government demanding a probe. The question is: has he acted on his own or is some Youth Congress(I) higher-up pulling the strings?

ENCORE

DID the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the crack intelligence outfit entrusted with the job of external espionage, work for Mrs Gandhi as an organisation during her earlier tenure as Prime Minister? According to reliable sources, it was not RAW as an organisation that was used, but a group of senior officers drawn from all intelligence outfits.

This "caucus" was headed by the former CBI chief, D. Sen, who figured prominently in many Shah Commission cases. A similar caucus has once again been formed, comprising some of the old hands, all retired from service. This group is reportedly scanning the list of officers in the Central Secretariat to trace the black sheep. Some officers at the level of Joint Secretaries were singled out and one of them, who had close links with Jagjivan Ram, was informed

at 1.30 pm one day that he should proceed on leave at 4 pm that afternoon pending a decision on his future assignment.

HOT STUFF

THE Delhi Administration has imposed a ban on the use of air-conditioners during certain hours in view of the deteriorating power situation in the capital. But the rule seems to exclude the city's private hotels. While the Government-owned hotels switch off their airconditioning plants whenever directed to do so by the electricity authorities, the private hotels seem to be getting no such directives. The condition in a five-star ITDC hotel in South Delhi is pathetic. The management has run out of pedestal fans while the guests are sweating it out in the summer heat of Delhi.

DISCORDANT MUSIC

MUSICAL horns are banned under the Motor Vehicles Act. This provision was obviously incorporated into the Act, framed in the mid-1930s, in order to avoid distraction to motorists on roads by noise emitted by the musical horns. But Delhi at present is bristling with cars blowing musical horns and the traffic police seem to be turning a Nelson's eye towards this fact. As if that is not enough, the shop which specialises in such horns and other fancy car accessories, situated in the municipal market in Connaught Circus, opposite the York Hotel, also seems to enjoy immunity from parking regulations in force in the area. Parking on either side of the road before the shop is prohibited, but its clients park their vehicles right outside the shop. The traffic police do not bother to tow away the vehicles parked in that zone, as is done in other parts of Connaught Circus. But that is not all. This shop has now expanded its floor area by digging into the basement and utilising that space, in contravention of the building bylaws of the market, which is on lease from the New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC). If the *Indian Express* can be prosecuted for utilising the basement in their new building for extra floor area, then why is the Delhi administration not aware of this violation of building bylaws in the heart of the capital? And why are the traffic police so complacent?

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

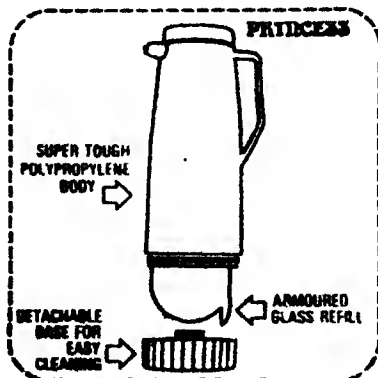
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SUNDAY

M. J. Akbar reports on **The Mandai massacre**

THE BUTCHER OF MANDAI

Jai Kumar
Dev Verma



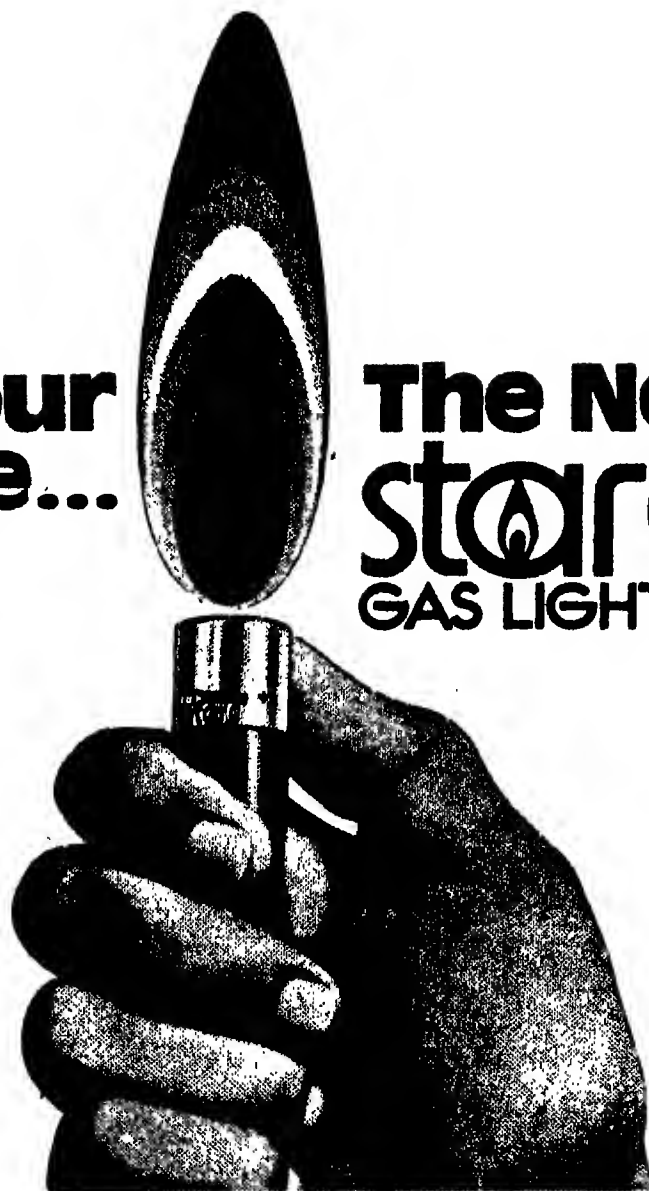
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We hold animal husbandry camps, cattle shows, exhibitions, soil-testing campaigns, lectures, sponsor conducted tours, Krishi-melas, films, slide shows, audio-visual presentations on scientific farming methods, bringing the farmers face to face with scientists. We have organised Farm Information Exchange Clubs to help diffusion of the latest farm technology.

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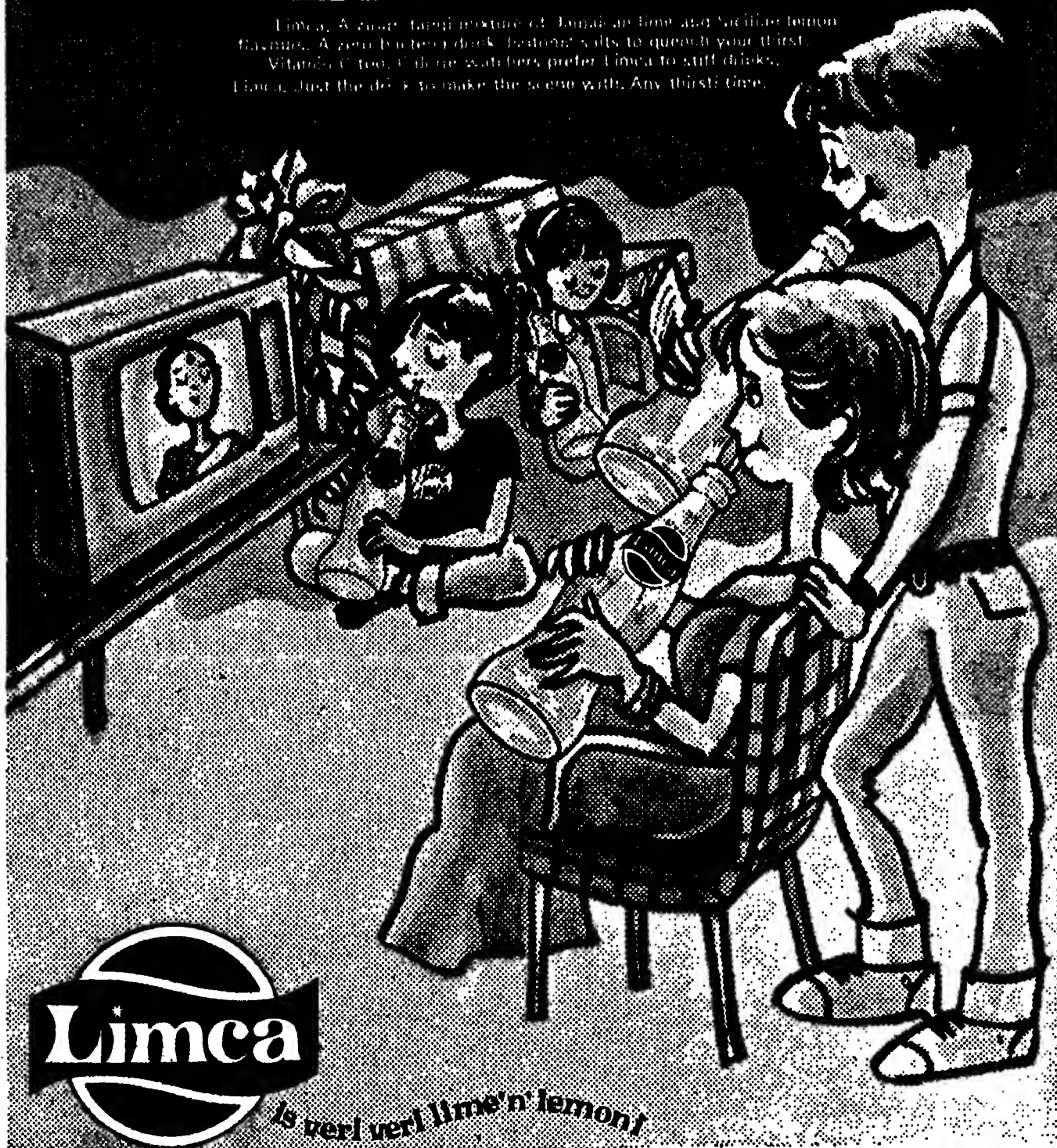
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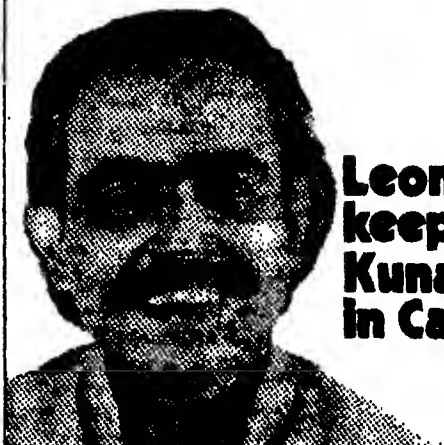
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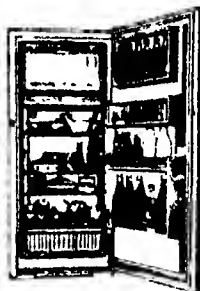


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Tooshar Pandit



Tribals gone berserk brutally hacked nearly 300 Bengalis in the village of Mandai in Tripura. Even children and women were not spared. M. J. AKBAR recounts the gory drama and TOOSHAR PANDIT profiles Jai Kumar Dev Verma, Mandai's deadliest killer. Plus, an in-depth analysis of the movement against Bengalis in Tripura. **Page 14**



In the coming 20 years, nearly two billion more people will be added to the world's population despite the rate of population growth falling to below two per cent. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities has stated that unless special attention is paid to population programmes, economic development in the Third World countries will remain a dream. **Page 37**

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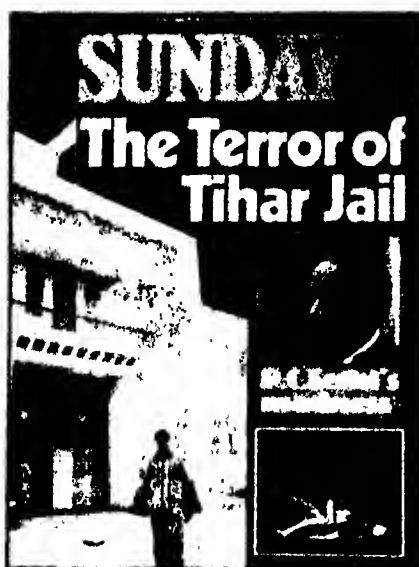
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Editor M. J. Akbar

Assistant Editor Subir Roy Editorial Staff Nirmal Mitra,
David McMahon, Saumitra Banerjee, Tirthankar Ghosh, S. N. M. Abdi
Delhi Correspondent Ajoy Bose
Art Director Bipul Guha Asst Art Director Amiya Bhattacharya

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Crime behind bars

APROPOS of Ajoy Bose's report "The Terror of Tihar Jail" (May 18), now that all the diabolical deeds inside Tihar have come to light, it is clear that the corruption has reached its zenith. It is an irony that the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent have joined hands with the criminals. With the sanctity of Tihar Jail lost the government must take drastic measures to put an end to this. Sobhraj's statement that "Indian laws are in favour of the accused" is enough cause for the higher-ups to shake off their complacency. How long will the law remain what it is — a riddle on paper? *Debasish Ray, Orissa.*

PROBABLY for the first time a reputed magazine like yours has come out with an in-depth study of the underworld's happenings. Ajoy Bose deserves special thanks for his interviews and meetings with the right people inside Tihar Jail. He would have done better if he probed a little more the quagmire and pinpointed the brains behind the murky goings-on. I hope our Prime Minister will take the necessary steps to prevent this undestorable criminal

Problem minority

SUNIL BHATTACHARYA took pains to quote figures of the so-called "minorities" in Assam (May 18) as against the local Assamese. But what is he trying to prove? If the so-called minorities are actually in a minority in the State then why did they try to impose their language as the official language of Assam on several occasions in the past? Will Mr Bhattacharya deny history too? Communal violence has now erupted in this town. In all these

racket behind bars.
Mohan Mukherjee, Orissa.

THANKS to Rajesh Kaushik for being courageous enough to speak out about the conditions of Tihar Jail (May 18). If such is the condition of a capital jail one can well imagine the state of other jails in the country. One hopes that after the publication of the enquiry report by Subodh Markandey, corrective measures will be adopted to plug the loopholes of the jail administration.
D. P. Banerjee, Calcutta.

IT IS not fair that criminals should live at the cost of the state. The several atrocities mentioned are only the natural result of this. The jails should house only the under-trials and as soon as they are convicted they should be taken to open jails where they can be made to work for a living and also meet the cost of the establishment.
P. T. N. Nair, Ottapalam.

THE Deputy Superintendent and other officials who are alleged to have links with the kingpin of Tihar, Sobhraj, must be suspended immediately. A team of strong disciplined men should control these hardcore criminals.
K. Vafreshwar, Bombay.

IT IS surprising how this famous jail in the capital can be a breeding ground for corruption and hardened criminals can escape the notice of the authorities. However, the charges levelled against the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, appear to be somewhat exaggerated. It is stated that four prisoners work as the Superintendent's servants but as far as I know according to the Jail Manual he is granted that privilege. Again you have published interviews with people who have made accusations; what about the accused? An interview with the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent in question would have been revealing.
Bibhuti Mishra, Bhubaneswar.

INDIA is probably the only country where corruption can flourish on such a scale. Tihar seems to be worse than the local jails.
Sudhangru Panigrahy, Phulbani.

cases the minorities were responsible for starting the violence. This is an officially acknowledged fact. Allow me to point out that figures are not always reliable in this country. Politicians do not hesitate to manipulate figures to suit their own ends. Witness how Mr Jyoti Basu is defending the cause of the minorities who are foreigners here. Jyoti Basu seems to spend a lot of time thinking of novel ways to deride and denigrate the movement of the Assamese people.
Deden Dutta, Tezuka.

Fiction, not history

THIS refers to Partha Chatterjee's interview with Mr Prafulla Mahanta, the firebrand AASU President, under the caption "No deportation, no oil" (May 4). In reply to one of the questions, Mr Mahanta asserts that those people residing in 'Char lands' who hoisted the 'Pakistani flag' in 1965 and whose names are with the police would be deported first. Hoisting a 'foreign national flag' is a crime against one's own land. For this offence there are provisions in law for specified forms of punishment. But by no stretch of imagination can the person concerned be termed a foreign national liable for deportation. Further, to administer punishment to a group of people for some assumed crime committed by them or by their parents 15 years back reminds one of the proverbial story of the wolf and lamb. Instead of punishing those who are alleged to have hoisted the 'Pakistan flag' in Char lands, it is the erring guardians of the law who failed to apply and administer the law in time who should be punished forthwith. In reality, the so-called story about the hoisting of the 'Pakistani flag' by the timid minority community makes good fiction but bad history.
Shaikh Shahjahan, Dhubri.

Crazy story

"THE madness of P. C. Sethi" (May 18) made delightful reading. I see in this eccentric another Raj Narain. If such a court jester like P. C. Sethi is allowed to hold a ministerial post the country would soon go to the dogs. If a Cabinet Minister drowns himself in alcohol all day and dishes out tips on sexual potency, how could an ordinary citizen have any respect for authority? The Prime Minister should either advise him to correct his ways or relieve him of his post instantly. Recently, in Bombay he suddenly walked out of a meeting as the speakers spoke in English.
A. K. A. C. Chakraborty, Bombay.

THE story of P. C. Sethi was a welcome relief. The episode of how he dived into a swimming pool in a three-piece suit is just fantastic. The way he named the aircraft 'vespa', 'bicycle' and 'ambassador' exposes his original self. In fact, he is the one man who could beat Raj Narain at antics. SUNDAY should come up with many more such amusing strokes.
Rajesh C. Sinha, Durgapur.

IT IS a tragedy that a Central Minister who swears by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru indulges in such shocking acts.
Shrish Koyal, Korba.

WHILE P. C. Sethi's madness has become such a widely known fact it is intriguing as to why the Prime Minister still retains him in the Ministry. It is time medical fitness was made a precondition for anyone joining the Cabinet. Also there should be an annual medical check-up of ministers. Mr Sethi seems to be suffering from cerebral atherosclerosis—a serious condition which affects intellectual faculties. It is dangerous to have such people at the helm of the state. The earlier they are out the better.
Dr S. G. Balani, Bombay.

I DO not understand why Mrs Gandhi prefers to have such nincompoops in her Cabinet, even though she is aware of P. C. Sethi's eccentricities. The image of the country will certainly be spoiled if people abroad go through the article. May I mention another mad act to P. C. Sethi's credit? One morning he called a meeting of senior officers of his own

department in Nirman Bhavan and placed an order for South Indian dishes like 'Idli' and 'Vada'. When the waiters brought the stuff Mr Sethi, just after taking a sip of "sambhar", threw the dishes all over the place. As a result important files, papers, the wall and a very costly carpet were messed up. Mr Sethi after this incident ordered the closure of the coffee house. This coffee house was a source of great relief for government servants who could get food at subsidised rates.
K. K. Kaul, New Delhi.

THE correspondent went on a voyage from Bhopal to a bedroom to probe the 'minister saab's' zany life-style. But how could he miss the spicy Sethi vs Makkar affair at Delhi Airport? The story of the unlucky personal secretary's humiliation at the hands of the Minister in full view of the Indian and foreign guests could have added salt to the soup.
G. Roy, New Delhi.

Slanging match

P. K. BANERJEE's article on the Federation Cup (May 18) did not deal comprehensively with the Cup Final which was marred by violence. The so-called stars of the two teams seemed to be more interested in assaulting each other rather than playing good soccer. The officials hardly helped to control the situation with their unseemly gestures. Some spectators fought among themselves, brandishing knives, razors and other weapons. A famed stopper-back of one of the teams kicked an overzealous spectator who invaded the field. Another star blinkman of the same team was seen making obscene gestures of the kind we expect from a hoodlum. It is clear by now that Calcutta soccer is dead. The AIFF bosses are still

slumbering.
Soulik Biswas, Calcutta.

FOOTBALL lovers of Calcutta must have been shocked to see the unsportsmanlike behaviour of the players in the field. The referee could hardly do anything when the players themselves were behaving shamefully. In the early Seventies when British soccer was rocked by hooliganism, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the cause of the violence. They took the decision that if a particular club's supporters started a brawl, the club would forfeit the right to play the next three matches on the ground. The players would be heavily fined and suspended. The government should take a firm step to stop the violence that passes off as sports.

Gautam Kumar Singh, Calcutta.

Jungle bungle

THE article "Save Orissa's forests" (April 6) by Amarendra Bose was well written, but hardly factual. Where did the author get the idea of a "threat to the tropical main forest" in Orissa? Orissa in general, and Mayurbhanj in particular, does not have a tropical main forest. Secondly, a rate of deforestation of 14 acres per minute would result in the clearance of 3,02,400 of the 6,50,000 acres of Similipal forests which is a little less than half of the total forest area. Would the author care to prove how the entire forest is being lost? The concept of ticketed land was broadly accepted by the government when it decided to provide land for the landless adivasis in 1974. Adivasis were allotted land by the Revenue Department which had valuable forest growth in it. It was decided to give land to the adivasis after the Forest Department had disposed of the forests. But since the process of disposal of forests was time-consuming, it was

decided to charge royalties on the trees that were cut, and allot the land and the trees to the adivasis who became the owners. The disposal of trees on such ticketed lands is governed by a statute known as the Orissa Timber and other Forest Produce Transit Rules, 1967. It is the responsibility of both the Revenue and Forest Departments to decide the manner in which such disposal is to be regulated. No public servant has the right to arbitrarily stop such removal unless the rules are suitably modified. The misuse of permits cannot be blamed on the issuing officer but on those who abuse them.

The entire operation of locating a tree, having it felled, logged, dragged to the road and transported is a long-drawn process, requiring cutters, draggers, contractors, the services of both revenue and forest officials and transporters. The entire operation as reported by the author, must have employed at least 1,00,000 mandays of labour.

C. B. Mohanty, Joint Secretary, Orissa Forest Service Association.

Initiative for trouble

THIS refers to Pran Chopra's article "The limits of charisma" (May 4). The author has commended our Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi for taking the initiative in tackling some vital issues, like the Assam impasse. In my view she has shown no initiative at all. Mr Chopra has also cited the assassination of the Nirankari Baba. Undoubtedly, Mrs Gandhi did not waste time in visiting the Baba's bereaved family. But why was the Baba not given adequate protection? The conspiracy to kill him was known about since long. As for the foreigners issue in Assam, the agitation was and continues to be peaceful and democratic. The Central Government, by adopting repressive measures, is adding fuel to the fire. Does Mrs Gandhi need as long as eight to ten months to find a solution? She had herself said at the outset that Assam alone cannot bear the burden of lakhs of infiltrators and that other states should share the burden. Surprisingly, she stopped saying so before the recent Assembly elections.
Ambika Charan Deka, Wokha, Nagaland.

Slave industry?

"BIHARI slaves in Punjab" (May 18) is very misleading. Having been in the construction line and working as a labour supplier for the last 15 years I have seen labourers of various parts of the country from close quarters. Bihari labourers are trusted for their hard work. Punjab and Haryana are the only states where physical labour is honoured and paid. Being a Bihari I have always tried to mix with the Biharis working in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi to share their experiences. They are satisfied with their lot. My own village folk have already settled and many more are in the process of settling down in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi to share their experiences. I am surprised that they are satisfied with their lot. The reason for this is the better economic condition, equal social status and recognition of hard work. An average labourer in Punjab gets more than thrice the amount his counterpart gets in Bihar or West Bengal.
Ram Avtar Prasad Singh, Ranchi.

THE article by Mr Banerjee gives the impression that all labourers who are brought every year to Punjab are maltreated. Of course, I do not deny instances when labourers are beaten up, barely fed and made to work for long hours in inhuman conditions. Most of the labourers move in groups and have a leader who is reasonably familiar with the local language. They work on the basis of a contract and not for daily wages. To complete the work the labourers put in long hours of work and toil against time in order to start work for another contract.
Mohan Singh, Jammu Cantt.

SANJAY GANDHI

(Born : 14 December 1946—Died : 23 June 1980)

Destiny is a cruel master. There is no adjective for some of its games. And it has been particularly fickle towards Mrs Indira Gandhi and her family, lifting them to the skies one moment, and hitting them with tragedy in the next. The worst that could happen took place in the early hours of June 23, when Sanjay Gandhi, only 33 years old, died when the two-seater plane in which he was flying crashed to the ground.

We were able to change two pages of this issue to carry this report. In our next issue we will deal at special length with the career and personality of Sanjay Gandhi.



Raghu Rai

THE red Pitts S—2A aircraft carrying Sanjay Gandhi and Captain Subhas Saxena, the chief instructor of the Delhi Flying Club, had taken off around eight in the morning on June 23. It was not the first time that Sanjay Gandhi was flying the aircraft. The previous day he had made two trips in the aircraft and both were successful.

Shortly after taking off, just before 8.10 some residents of Willingdon Crescent had seen the aircraft flying and the pilot doing aerobatics. According to a resident of Willingdon Crescent: "We saw the aircraft. It was making loops in the air. First one, then the second and finally the third. We were wondering what the pilot was doing and thought it was extremely dangerous. And then we did not see

anything. We heard a crash and knew what had happened." In fact, minutes before the crash someone in 1, Safdarjung Road had seen the red aircraft streak past the house.

What had in fact happened was that the aircraft had failed to pull out of the fourth loop and fell into a *nullah* (ditch) near Palika Vihar in the Willingdon Crescent area. Residents rushed to the



Rajni Rai

spot to find a heap of tangled metal and a leg sticking out from the mess. It was Sanjay Gandhi's leg. The local residents of the area were not the only people to have seen the aircraft plunge into the ground. Men from the Delhi Fire Service doing their morning parade at Chanakya-puri, noticed a red aircraft losing height at a fast pace. As the aircraft lost height it hit some neem trees and crashed. Instantly some men from the Chanakya-puri Fire Service station rushed to the site. But before the bodies could be extricated, the metal had to be axed through and the straps cut open.

Even as they were at work, the firemen did not realise that Sanjay Gandhi had been one of the occupants of the aircraft. But Mr Gandhi's body was recognised when it was finally extricated from the aircraft. His head had been bashed in and his face was full of bruises. Mrs Gandhi was informed. She rushed to the spot and identified the body. The two bodies were then taken to Rammanohar Lohia Hospital and at 8.40 a.m. Sanjay Gandhi and Subhas Saxena were declared dead.

The aircraft which crashed was designed for aerobatics and had great aerodynamic qualities and was of the same pattern as the one used in World War II by the German ace, the "Red Baron". The craft was declared airworthy only three days ago.

"The aircraft", says an eye-witness, "put through four loops before it crashed. Each such manoeuvre brings the aircraft closer to the ground and each succeeding loop is tighter than the previous one, progressively increasing the gravitational force on the pilots. It is possible that the two pilots blacked out during the fourth loop due to extreme gravitational force and could not manage to pull out the craft."

SAUMITRA BANERJEE

COVER STORY



History, certainly, has parallels for what happened; independent India has none.

The Mandai massacre

Photographs by
Tooshar Pandit



By M. J. AKBAR

FRIDAY, June 12, eleven in the morning. The silence of death lay like an oppressive blanket on a gutted Mandai. The mangled corpses had just been buried, and the powerful, pungent, sweet-sick smell of rotting bodies assailed the mind till you wanted to retch. A persistent fire, which had braved time and the rains, still burned at the foot of one stump; or perhaps it was a recent fire, provoked by some forgotten spark beneath the ashes. Who knew, and what did it matter now? Punctuating the silence were the sounds of death: a dog crying piteously; searching for lost masters; in the distance, jackals howling in bursts; a chicken fluttering away in fear as we suddenly came upon her; another dog scratching hungrily at a human bone. The debris of disaster lay scattered around: old letters of love; land deeds from an East Pakistan which these people had left in pain long years ago; a heavy steel safe which even a crowbar had not been able to prise open; a partially burnt, toppled letterbox with

perched letters around it, the charred remnants of a *chakki*; the soft white pots and pans of a village dispensary; burnt grain: everything of any value had been looted.

On the morning of June 7, Mandai was still a bustling bazaar town, nestling in a dip among the hills, the nerve centre of trade and commerce for numerous villages that surrounded it. All the business was in the hands of Bengalis, who constituted the total population of Mandai: about 500, and the football field and the school that dominated Mandai were both servicing basic Bengali needs. The tribals would come down to this bazaar, from their villages on the *tillas*, or hilltops, for their meagre needs, as the tribals came down to hundreds of similar bazaars all over Tripura. But the bazaar was both a source of succour, and the symbol of Bengali domination in a land which 31 years ago had a tribal Maharaja, a land where 70 per cent of the population was tribal and not Bengali, as it is today.

Fifteen kilometres or so from Mandai is another bazaar called Lembucherra. A little after noon on June 6, two tribal youths went to the shop of Sadhan Karmakar to buy a *dao*, the hatchet which is an essential commodity in Tripura. Bhasan Deb was sitting in the shop, and he gave a *dao* to the tribal. The tribal tested the weapon on a pineapple (this is the pineapple season, and the fruit is sweet, cheap and freely available), but couldn't cut it properly. Mockingly, the tribal said, "*Bangali daoer ei abastha* (This is the condition of all Bengali hatchets)," and threw the *dao* back. By



chance, the *dao* flew from his hand and hit a tribal youth sitting there, watching the proceedings. His name was Pradip Dev Varma. Pradip got cut on the head.

That was the spark which lit the communal fire. Of course, the conditions were fertile. Since June 1, the Party of tribal extremists, the T.U.J.S., had intensified its agitation, and had asked all tribals to boycott these bazaars. Three

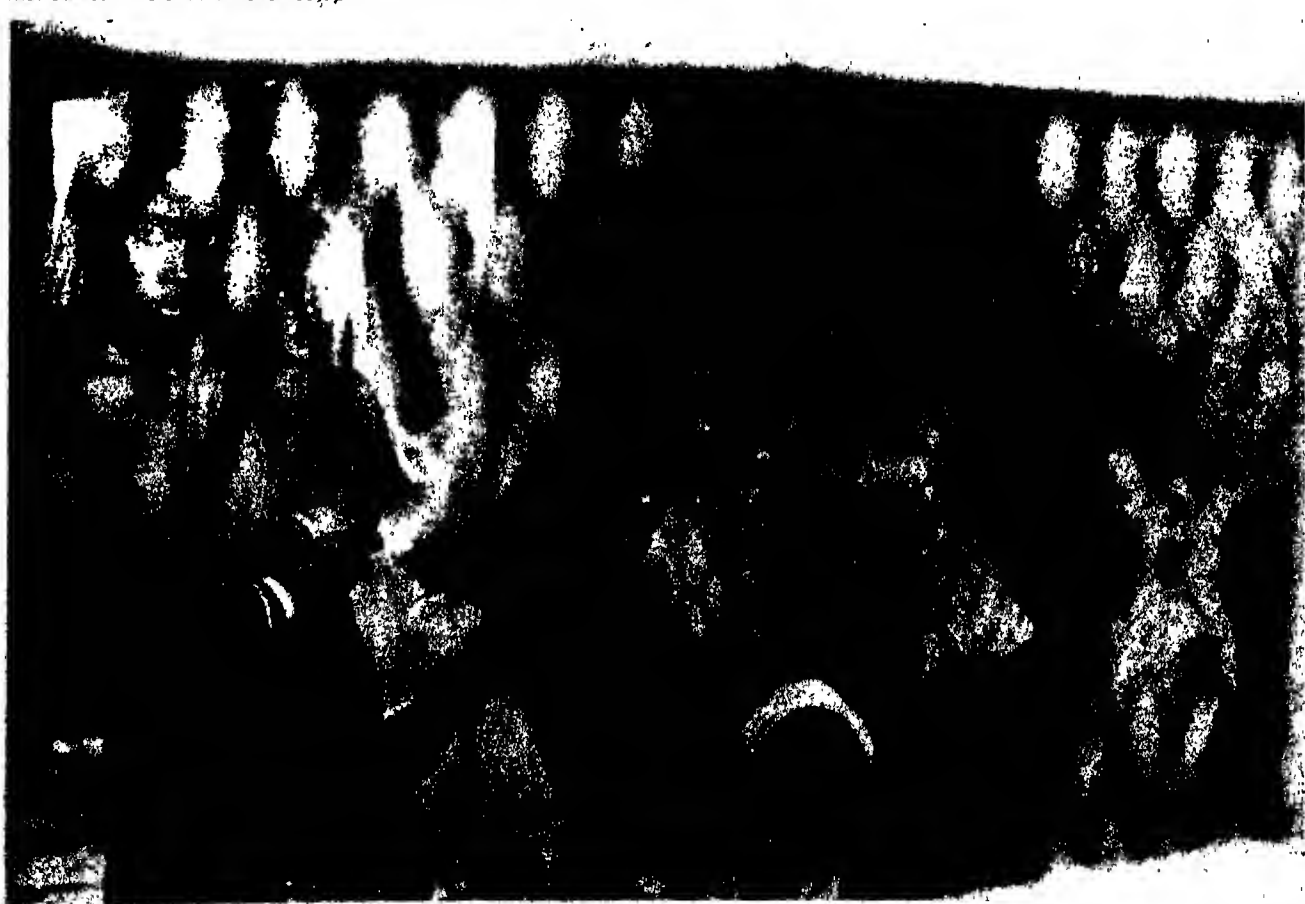
people had already been killed during the past week: two tribals and one non-tribal, and 33 had been injured (17 tribals and 16 non-tribals).

As soon as Pradip was hurt, rumours spread fast that a tribal boy had been attacked by Bengalis. Armed mobs of tribals and Bengalis immediately formed; three Bengali shops were ransacked, and Bengalis burnt eight tribal houses in Krishna Kobrapara. At two in the afternoon, V.V. Sarda, assistant inspector general of police picked up the ringing telephone in his office in Agartala: "Some tribal has been injured in a clash" was the message; this was the first call for help. Sarda informed the city control and the Tripura East police station. The BSF, who have their headquarters at Shalbagan, which is about six kilometres from Lembucherra, turned up on the scene with commendable promptness and managed to control a situation which might have led to far greater bloodshed.

But if things were comparatively calm here, within six hours an area within a 20-kilometre radius was in flames, as tribals, as if on a given signal, raided, attacked and burnt Bengali village after village. Their main object was to burn; their intention was to "liberate" tribal Tripura by driving out Bengalis from their houses and shops, and burning them to cinders so that they would not return. All through the night of June 6 and 7, the tribals were on a rampage.

By the morning of June 7, tension had crept into the busy air of Mandai. At noon that Saturday, tribals turned up in

Mandai survivors at a relief camp



scattered groups and began setting fire to the shops in the bazaar. Satya Ranjan Deb, 33, had a small groceries shop in that bazaar (when I met him, he was still in a state of shock, and was being treated for severe hatchet wounds in the G.B. hospital), and he recalls that when he saw arson beginning, he shut his shop and went home. A local tribal elder, who lived in that area, advised all the residents of Mandal to leave their houses and collect, for their safety, in the largish school. They did so.

There was a police outpost at Mandal with five constables, including one tribal. While these policemen did nothing to stop the arson in the afternoon, they did promise protection to the more than 500 people who had gathered together. An impromptu camp was formed. Tribals had gathered in plain sight of the Benga-

lis. The topography of Mandal is typical of Tripura; undulating, with a series of low slopes and valleys called *tillas* and *lungas* respectively. Beneath one such *tilla* was the police outpost, and the Bengalis gathered there, and in two nearby houses, for the night. As darkness fell, the fear intensified, and the violence of the tribal mood communicated itself to the surrounded Bengalis.

Around seven, the policemen told the scared Bengalis that they would move up to the top of the *tilla* beneath which the refugees had gathered, in order to better protect them from attacks. The policemen took their guns and their ammunition with them. And then, in an astonishing act of cowardice and criminal neglect, they bolted! The tribal constable, Jivan Dev Varma, defected to the attackers, carrying his weapon and

ammunition with him. The Bengali policemen, further unnerved by this, simply took the road to safety - towards the main Jirania police station on the Agartala-Assam highway (they reached Jirania at around midnight). So, not merely were the Bengalis completely unprotected all through the night, but the gun and ammunition of one policeman was actually used against them. This tribal constable must have told his compatriots that the Bengalis were totally defenceless. But the tribals did not attack all through that long night. Why they did not do so was to become clear soon: they wanted to loot all the Bengalis before they murdered them, and, secondly, they must have felt that the darkness of the moonless night would have hampered their attack.

Suspecting treachery on the part of the policemen (they could not be sure that the policemen would bolt, but they must have got an idea), the Bengalis decided to seek out help on their own initiative. At around eight in the evening, Sachindra Kumar Saha, in his late fifties, left Mandal, avoided the main road, and walked towards Jirania through the paddy fields and the jungle. He finally reached Jirania many hours later. At the police station, he found only a sentry and a wireless operator there: everyone else was on duty in the other riot-affected areas. He finally located the BDO, and informed him of the gravity of the situation.

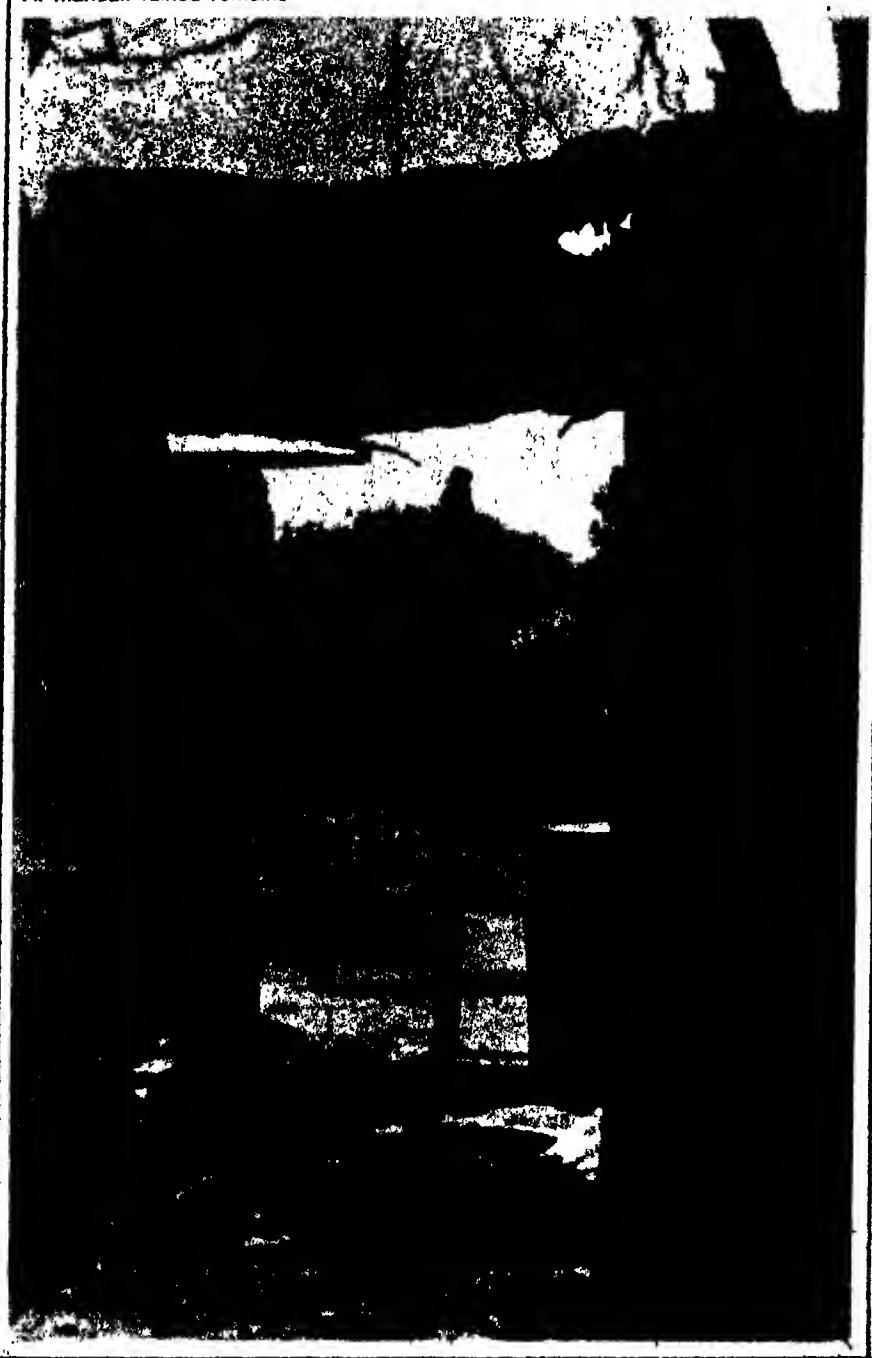
THE LONG NIGHT

A 23-year-old Bengali youth, Haralal Sil, had watched the police use the wireless, and after they left he began sending out messages on it. Late that evening Police Headquarters in Agartala picked up the SOS: "This place is under attack... send reinforcements..." Haralal Sil died before the messages he had sent out obtained results, although another young man who helped him, Robi Mazumdar, survived.

No one slept that night: the Bengalis, with the murderous tribals plainly visible, spent the night in terror and prayer, waiting for the police force which would deliver them from evil. Neither did the tribals sleep - they were conspiring.

Around first light, a handful of tribals came towards the Bengalis (Jaikumar Dev Varma, one of the main butchers of Mandal, and one of the prominent leaders of the local tribals, was among them), and told them that they had persuaded their fellow tribals not to kill the Bengalis. But a price had to be paid for this "magnanimity". The Bengalis would have to hand over all their money and gold before being allowed to leave. It did not take long for the Bengalis to agree to this bargain. Prabha Saha remembers that she handed over Rs 5,000 that was the sum of her family's savings. Some of the tribals who came to collect this loot have been recognised by the survivors. Baisakh Dev Varma came with a gun; Mahendra Dev Varma was the one making the promises of safety; of course, there was Jaikumar Dev Varma too. All were men around 40 years old. (It will be remembered that when the TUIJ was launched in 1967, it was basically a youth movement, and the average age of its members would be around 25 then; 1969 is almost 14 years later).

At Mandal: ruined remains



At about seven in the morning, the tribals signalled to the Bengalis that since they had now handed over all their possessions, they could leave. In a surge of relief, the Bengalis began rushing out of the camps in which they had been cooped up all that tense night. But it was only when they came out that the real terror began. History, one is certain, has parallels for what happened in that impossible hour that followed; independent India has none.

As the Bengalis began streaming out, the tribals descended on them from three sides. They were armed with their *takkals* (an all-purpose hatchet used by tribals), bows and arrows, while some of them had countrymade muzzle-loading guns. But the main weapon of attack was the brutal *takkal*. Indiscriminately, they hacked at the mass of human beings; the intention was to kill, and as a look at the injured proves, they aimed their *takkals* between the neck and the head so that every blow might prove a lethal one. And it often did. Babies were sometimes lifted by their hair, and their legs were hacked off before their heads were chopped off. Each tribal was indulging in his own personal macabre orgy, inspired by some evil fury in his subconscious. Screaming babies and children were snatched away from their mothers and hacked to death before the same treatment was meted out to the mother. There were no slogans being shouted, no cries, while the killings took place. The tribals only kept jumping in some primeval form of war dance, the excitement oozing out of their eyes, as they indulged in the eerily silent massacre in the bright sunlight. Basuna Sarkar, who survived despite a cut about three inches deep just above the collar bone (she fell unconscious among the dead bodies), has a one sentence description of what happened: "Amra bali hoehchilam (We were being sacrificed)".

After nearly an hour of this butchery, the tribals, exhausted, decided to rest. They had already accounted for 322 men, women, children and babies. The survivors cowered in the camp where they had spent the night. Many injured lay among the corpses. The tribals were resting before, in their next attack, they killed the remaining Bengalis. So far, they had met with no resistance from the Bengalis who simply accepted this butchery. During this lull, at about 8.30 in the morning, the long awaited police arrived. Providence, in a small gesture of mercy, had left some people alive to tell the world this horrible story.

THE POLICE

At five p.m. on Saturday, June 7, the Inspector General of Police Satyabrata Basu called R.N. Banerjee, commandant, Tripura Armed Police, to his office, and told him that the situation had deteriorated sharply in Jirania and its neighbourhood, and he should proceed there at once. Given the extent of the calamity, the police resources were pathetically small. Tripura has a total police force of 6,000, which means that at any given time, not more than 3,000 policemen are available for active, on-the-spot duty. Ever since he came to power, the present Chief Minister has been asking the Centre for finance to raise two more battalions, but the Janata

government refused on the grounds that there were no funds available. The situation in Tripura was already tense since June 1, and police had been deployed in small numbers at sensitive points. So Banerjee got into a jeep with his two personal escorts, with a one-tonner truck carrying one section, of nine armed policemen, behind him. They left for Jirania, about 15 kilometres away.

They first encountered rioting at Madhabnagar; two mobs were pelting stones at each other. The tribals were armed largely with bows and arrows; a few also had guns. The Bengalis had stones and bamboo spikes (*muli beams*). Seeing the police, the Bengalis not merely were relieved, but, obviously, demanded immediate action against the tribals. The police force finally dispersed them.



clearing the tribals through the paddy fields. All along the Agartala-Assam highway, the police force was stopped continuously by either agitated Bengalis demanding protection, or by rioting mobs. Not merely did Banerjee have to order firing in four places that night, but he had to pacify terrified groups of Bengalis who had collected all along the highway after leaving their villages.

At Ranirbazaar, Banerjee had to set up a patrol for the protection of the shops. He finally reached Jirania police station at around seven p.m., where he found one ASI, two constables, and one radio operator trying to manage as best as they could. And the *thana* was packed with refugees. Rumours were rife that Misos armed with sophisticated guns (actually, no evidence of the use of sophisticated weapons was found in the widespread rioting; but at moments of crisis, rumours become beliefs), and the refugees simply gheraoed the police commandant; it was with great difficulty that he managed to persuade the Bengalis that their safety lay in his mobility. As it is, he had a completely inadequate number of men to control such largescale arson and assault. And there were innumerable calls for help coming from a whole range of places. It was simply impossible to answer them all.

It was about ten thirty when Banerjee first heard, from the local people, that the situation in a place called Mandal, about four kilometres in the interior, was grave. Simultaneously, he also learnt that tribals had fired at Bengalis at a place called Champaknagar, and there was an SOS from the Champaknagar police for rifles and ammunition. Banerjee decided to rush towards Champaknagar first.

In the meantime, the army had come out on a flag march. But their orders were to march up to Jirania, and they had no instructions to go into the interior; the army captain said that he could not go either to Champaknagar or anywhere else without specific orders from his commander. (Later, it was largely the army which managed to bring matters under control.) So Banerjee first deployed part of his force (by eleven, that night, two sections of the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary, specially brought the state government in early June, apprehending trouble, were also available to him) in various places and set off for Champaknagar. He returned to Jirania from there after two in the morning.

In Jirania, he found one of the constables who had fled from Mandal; the constable told Banerjee that the tribals had threatened them with death if they did not surrender so they had run away. In anger, Banerjee caught two of the constables who had bolted, forced them to join his party, and decided to leave for Mandal.

But once again they were stopped: this time by people from a village called Nayabadi. They said that Nayabadi was, in fact, on the way, and the police should first drive the tribals away from Nayabadi before going on to Mandal. And so, they went to Nayabadi. Arson was still going on when they reached Nayabadi; Banerjee recalls that he saw some huts which had just been set on fire. He had to order his men to shoot. The police tried to douse out the fires (strangely, the people were quite apathetic, using the

THE TOLL	
(as of June 15)	
DEATHS	421
ARMED	1007
GUNS SEIZED	707
PELLET GUNS	100
TRIBAL REFUGEES	32,000
BENGAL REFUGEES	218,000
HOUSES BURNT	10,000

* Bengalis allege that 107 bodies have been found floating in the Jarak Canal (tribals do not want to be cremated); Tribals say each figure is 100.

water from a well. A young tribal boy, hardly seven or eight years old, was arrested. He had looted some collars and a blue half pant from a tailor's shop; in his pockets were marble-sized lead balls, which were being used in the muzzle-loading guns, and a small quantity of gunpowder. He was sent to the *thana* in one jeep, about a kilometre away. Meanwhile, the police learnt that there was an unfordable ditch on the way to Mandal, and that they must now go to Mandal via the Suchindranagar colony, a longer route.

First light had already appeared on the eastern horizon, and the rain, which had been intermittently heavy through the night, had stopped, when the police reached the Nayabadi. They had worked all through the night without pause. Now as the sun rose they finally prepared to leave for Mandal. With them were two jeeps and a RAC truck.

Just before Mandal, the police party found a roadblock of trees. They cleared it, and went ahead. About 200 yards from Mandal, Banerjee stopped, and went up to a mound to take a look. He saw about 40 to 50 tribals either sitting or standing on the slope of a hill. He first wanted to ambush them, but soon realised that they had been seen. The tribals seemed excited, and Banerjee noticed that some of them had muzzle-loading guns. The police opened fire, and in the first exchange, the tribals replied with two shots, a hail of arrows, and a barrage of stones. When the police went ahead, the tribals broke into two groups, some running straight back on the road, and the others disappearing into marshy land.

The real tragedy was that if the police had reached an hour or so earlier, no one would have died at Mandal.

THE SURVIVORS

THE first impression that the police had upon reaching Mandal was that there was no one there. Then suddenly they began hearing loud cries. People, bleeding profusely, came running towards the street. In the madness of relief, people began boarding the RAC truck on their own. At least 100 people got up before anyone could say or do anything

(in any case; what could anyone say or do?). No one had any belongings. Some mothers came clutching their babies tightly. Those who could not get into the truck, sat on the streets. Everyone was weeping in sheer relief and in pain: the injuries were ghastly, with barely unsevered necks, limbs, or with chopped off hands. Some of the injured began crawling out from under the shelter of corpses.

R. N. Banerjee still shudders when he recalls the scene, and repeats what so many other hardboiled veterans of war and crime also said: they had seen a lot of violence in their lives, but even in their worst nightmares they never thought they would see anything like this: in a hushed voice, Banerjee told me "*Aumi shocked hoye gelam* (I was shocked)". One has used and heard the word "shocked" being used many times, but I can hardly convey the meaning which was contained in Banerjee's use.

As he went towards the camp where the Bengalis had been staying, the first thing that he saw was the body of a young man; there was an injury on his back, and his genitals had been dug out. He went into the deserted *thana*, and discovered that the wireless was still working. He sent off a message to the PHQ. Then he came out and spoke to some of the Bengalis: they mentioned that there were hundreds of dead bodies all over. They pointed out a nearby hut. He went there. In one room he saw the hodies of 17 or 18 children, the oldest being not more than 10 years old. They had all been butchered. A six month old baby had both its legs hacked off. All the children had cuts on their heads and necks. Nearby, there was a heap of adult bodies, one piled on top of the other. "I have never seen so many dead bodies in my life," says Banerjee. He counted up to 68 bodies right there. Then he couldn't take it any more: he felt like vomiting.

Outside, more bodies were being found, strewn on the fields, half-floating in ponds. And the policemen were becoming mad with anger at the sight of this massacre. A subedar from the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary felt overpowered by his rage. His eyes bulging, his cap in one hand, his rifle in the other, his belt loose, he came up to Banerjee and said, "*Yeh sab kya cheez hai! Saab, hamko hukum do!* (What is all this Sir, give us the order!)" He was so angry he wanted to chase the tribals and take revenge then and there. The subedar continued: "*Hamne to bahut kuch dekha... yeh kya hai... bacha ko maarta kyon hai?* (I have seen a lot... but what is this... why do they kill children?)"

Two constables who were with the force that day found that they could not eat or sleep for two days, and were happy at being given continuous duty. Mr Banerjee faced the same problems. Mr Mukherjee, DSP, who went with the post-mortem party later, told Banerjee that after seeing Mandal, "When I sleep I feel as if the dead bodies want to say something to me".

There was a postscript on that morning of June 8. The police captured an old tribal lady, who was weeping nearby. She said, "The men told us not to get out of our houses and not to interfere. I could see them killing, but what could I do?" She admitted that the tribals of the adjoining villages were together in the conspiracy. The police let her go.

THE HOSPITAL

ON Sunday, June 8, at around 11.30 the Emergency Medical Officer at the Govind Ballabh Pant (known as GB) Hospital picked up the phone. He heard that between 350 to 500 casualties were coming from a place called Mandai (the final number was less, as there were more dead than injured). Dr R. Datta, the chief of surgery, had come that day, and the news was given to him. "Can't be," was his first reaction. But within 15 minutes, three trucks, accompanied by an angry crowd of Bengalis which had gathered spontaneously, rolled towards the main entrance. And from these trucks the injured began to be taken out. "It was a horrible sight," recalls Dr Datta.

"The first person I saw on the truck was a young woman, about 25 years old," remembers Dr Datta. "She was sitting upright. Her left hand till the wrist had been chopped off; she had obviously been protecting her child by clutching it to her breast when the hatchet blow came. The fingers on her right hand were also gone. The child was dead; she could not save it. When the truck stopped, we found that she was dead too - she had died on the way". Later, he found this woman, whom he knew only as "Lily's mother" (Lily being the child's name) was the sister in law of one of the nurses working in GB Hospital. Dr Datta helped remove the patients, carrying one child straight to the operation theatre. Quickly, the other doctors, including those who were off on that Sunday, were summoned, and emergency operations started. Fourteen doctors and eight nurses worked furiously, operating on the trolleys, on the floor, on the beds, in



order to save lives. By three in the afternoon, 80 operations had been done. The hospital staff worked truly magnificently. The injuries were mainly deep multiple cuts above the chest level. Quite a few children, since they must have been carried on the shoulders by their parents, were cut on the legs. The youngest victim who came to the hospital was a baby girl, with one leg cut till the bone. Dr Datta operated on her. He recalls with pathos that as soon as he finished the operation, the child turned over, and, in relief, started gurgling with delight. This was the innocent child's answer to the inhumanity that had been visited upon her.

The hospital had been cleared of its normal patients to make place for those injured in the riots. And each hospital bed contained one irreparably damaged life, one heart turned to stone, one pair of eyes which had seen hell, one mind

which was benumbed with terror. "Keyo nai, keyo nai," Prabha Saha kept moaning. No one else in her family had survived. She had a baby on her lap when the chopper fell on her head, leaving a wound and making her unconscious; the baby was snatched away and killed. She survived because she was given up for dead among the corpses. Distorted faces, immeasurably sad eyes. Kananbala Deb was six months pregnant; she had a deep gash just below her eyes. She could barely speak; she just broke out in huge, gasping sobs when anyone spoke to her. Her four year old boy was snatched away from her and killed in front of her eyes. Seven of her family of ten were dead. "Perhaps my husband is alive," she sobbed. "I have heard so".

Saraswati is already an orphan at the age of two. How she survived was a miracle. Just below her tiny nose is a deep cut by a *takkal*. She is being fed intravenously. On both her legs around the ankles she has received cuts; her feet were barely attached to her legs before they were stitched back. Kanan Ghosh, a teenager, stared dumbly ahead of her, in total shock. She has a cut on her right cheek. Agni Sarkar, two, is alone; her whole family is dead. When the police began separating the corpses, they found her still alive, protected by the fallen body of her mother.

The stories do not stop. One's heart becomes weighed down by the sorrow of tragedy, by the burden of strange questions, by the memory of a mutilated child's innocent smile, by a recollection of the marble eyes of destroyed adolescence. Visions flit across the kaleidoscope of the mind; emotions are benumbed. Mandai has now entered the dictionary of shame. But is there any resolution to this tragedy?



IT was the CPI which first began organising the tribals, as early as in 1948. Dasrath Deb Barma, a bright young student of Calcutta University, was drawn to Marxism, and instead of taking the conventional road towards a lucrative job and comfortable retirement, he took the harsher path of political work and militant struggle. He began organising the Tripura tribals to whom he belonged by birth, and quickly became a legendary figure among them. The Marxists were leading an armed struggle in those days of the late Forties, and the leaders lived underground, hiding from the police and administration which were determined to smash them.

The official propaganda handbook published by the present Marxist government, describes that struggle thus: "The story of the heroic armed struggles of 1949-52, which is no less bright than the struggles of Telengana, Kakdwip and Hajam tribal belt of Pakistan (sic: Hajam is now in Bangladesh), is not yet written. In the official records these uprisings of the people were often listed either as acts of dacoity or lawlessness—hence, the veritable butchery on the part of the official machinery of suppression. If the history of the rulers of Tripura is the dark stay (sic: presumably this word should be 'story') of monotonous struggles for power and sordid court intrigues; the history of the people of Tripura is the bright story of self-sacrifice and struggles against feudal exploitation".

Another person sent by the CPI, who quickly took over the leadership of the

Tribal refugees : victims of reprisal



TUJS : TRIPURA FOR TRIBALS !



While the Tripura Upajati Juha Samiti has not been banned, warrants have been issued against all members of its central committee, and many of its important supporters and sympathisers. 900 had been arrested by June 15, including two of TUJS's four MLAs. The charges, generally, are sedition and conspiracy to overthrow the legally constituted government. TOOSHAR PANDIT traces the history of this quasi secessionist organisation whose militancy has gathered momentum after the Assam agitation.

struggle, was a man called Nripen Chakraborty. He originally came from the adjoining Comilla district's Brahmanbaria town (now in Bangladesh). Both these leaders, through sacrifice and fearlessness, established their hold over the tribals. Dev Barma contested the 1952 elections to the Lok Sabha while he was hiding from the police. He managed both to keep away from the police and win a thumping electoral victory. After his victory, the police thought that now at least they could nab him as he was bound to show his face in order to reach Delhi. But the next thing the Tripura police heard about him was that he had suddenly surfaced in Parliament to take his oath.

Today, Nripen Chakravarty is the Chief Minister of Tripura, and Dasrath Dev Barma is the Education Minister: the two are the nodal points of the CPI(M) in the state.

Till 1967, the tribals knew of no other Party except first the CPI and later the CPI(M). In 1967, very quietly, a handful of young men formed the Tribal Upajati Juha Samiti; the word 'juha' was used because they were all young. (They are all of course much older now, but the name has not changed.) The TUJS was created quite obviously to challenge the Marxist domination over the tribal vote, and in this gameplan the TUJS received the overt and covert support of all the anti-Marxist forces who, till then, had failed miserably to make any appreciable dent among the tribals. The Congress too had an understanding with the TUJS. The clearest evidence of this was available when the TUJS openly supported the Emergency. The then Congress Chief Minister Sukhomoy Sengupta used the Emergency's special arbitrary powers to imprison 12 MLAs of his own Party who were not in his faction, but he discovered no need to arrest any MLA or leader of the TUJS.

The main demands of the TUJS since its inception have been four: creation of autonomous district councils for the tribal areas; restoration of the tribal reserved areas (a very late sop given by the last Raja of Tripura to the tribals after he found that his policy of encouraging Bengali immigration had led to impoverishment of tribals; this was scrapped by the Congress government in 1950); restoration of alienated tribal land and, lastly, recognition of Kakbarok as the official language of the tribals. The Marxist position on two of these issues is different only in degree. The Marxists have fixed 1969 as the cut-off year for the restoration of tribal lands, where the TUJS insists that the base year should be 1960. And the Marxists have accepted Kakbarok as the tribal language.

Who was really popular among the tribals was proved in the December 1977 Assembly elections. Not merely did the CPI(M) win an overwhelming victory in the state (56 out of 60 seats) but it also smashed the TUJS in the tribal areas by winning 17 of the 19 seats. However, the only other Party to win anything was the TUJS which got the other four seats, two from non-tribal constituencies. This led to some interesting developments. On

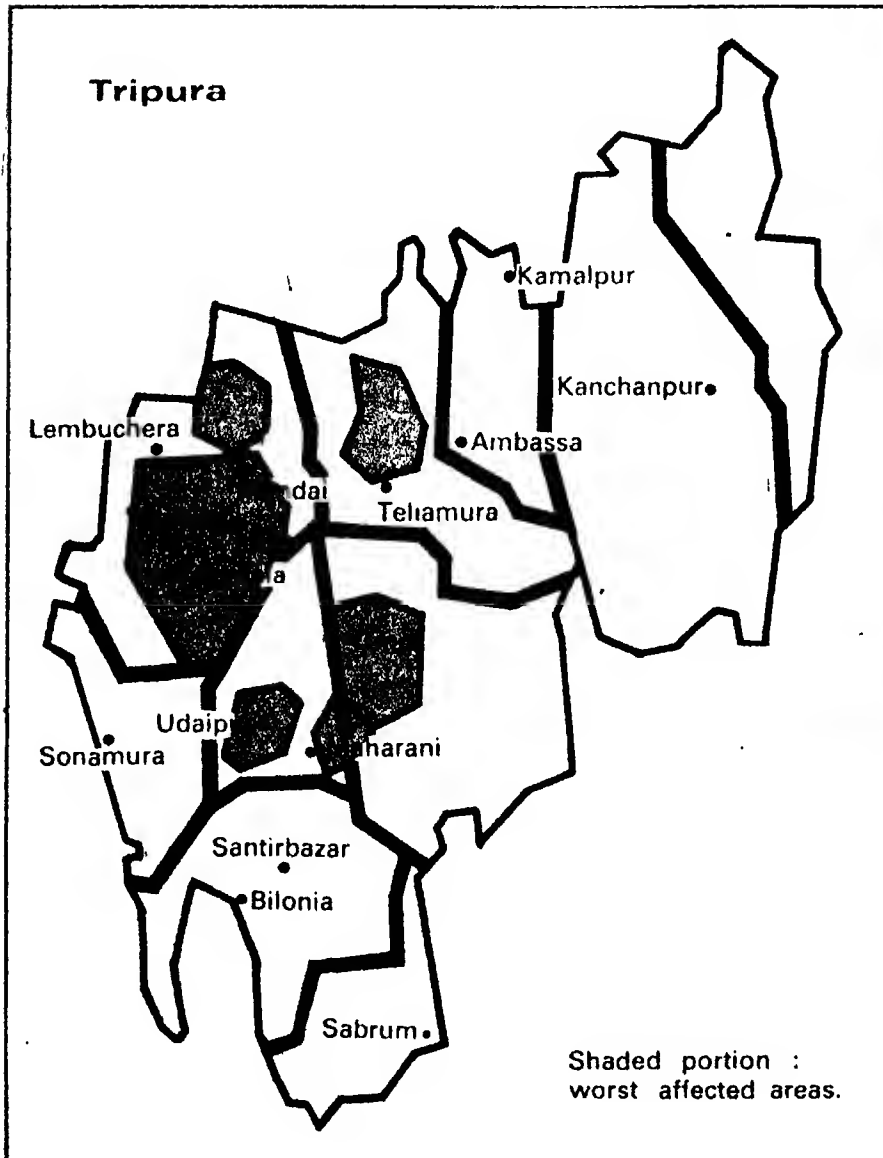
THE DEPLOYMENT as on JUNE 15

TRIPURA STATE POLICE	: 2750	
TRIPURA ARMED POLICE	: 2 battalions	(approx 2000)
SSB	: 4 platoons	(approx 1000)
ARMY	: 1 battalion	(approx 1000)
ASSAM RIFLES	: 1 platoon	(approx 300)
BSF	: 7 battalions	(approx 7000)
CRPF	: 6 battalions	(approx 6000)
RAJASTHAN AC	: 6 battalions	(approx 6000)

the one hand, all the non-CPI(M) Parties began even more to promote the TUJS in their efforts to demolish the CPI(M) grip over the tribal vote. And, on the other hand, a section within the TUJS, dispirited by the results, began to push the TUJS towards more militant postures, now convinced that electoral politics would not help them and the tribal cause could only be promoted through "nationalistic" slogans coupled with

doses of communal violence. Came the 1980 Parliamentary elections, and once again the CPI(M) demolished all the other Parties, including the TUJS, in both the Lok Sabha constituencies. This only further strengthened the power of the militants within the TUJS. They were now desperate for ways in which they could become the "real" representative of the tribals.

When the CPI(M) acquired undis-



puted power, it did all it could to reinforce the strong and traditional communist base in the tribal areas. It began work on the district councils bill. It restored tribal lands transferred after 1969, which it bought back from non-tribals for sums ranging between Rs.4,000 to Rs.9,000. The district councils bill, which gives tribals exclusive rights to own and occupy land in 47 tehsils and 164 villages, was introduced in the Tripura Assembly on January 17, 1979, and received the President's assent on July 20 that same year. If the TUJS had accepted the bona fides of these two decisions, then its very existence would have been threatened. So it raised objections. It wanted the district councils to be set up under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitu-

tion, which would have made them virtually autonomous, but the Centre allowed it to be passed only under the Seventh Schedule. And on the question of restoration of land, the TUJS wanted the base year to be 1960, not 1969. As the Marxist government completed one year of its life, on January 5, 1979, the TUJS decided to step up the tempo of battle. It threatened to set up a parallel government in the tribal belt bordering Mizoram in the east, and Bangladesh on the west, from 26 January 1979.

From June 1979 began the history of violence, instigated by militant elements of the TUJS on the one side, and ably fuelled by extremist communal organisations like the Amra Bangalee and Ananda Marg on the other. Sporadic clashes, attacks on institutions and protest movements followed. Till early 1980, 20 schools and 11 market offices and medical centres had been set on fire: all this was part of the TUJS's publicly proclaimed "liberation struggle". Tripura Sena and Sangkrak, the hit run squads of the TUJS, were also activated.

The instability in the north east created primarily by the Assam agitation also, predictably, had its impact on Tripura. The 12th annual conference of the TUJS, on March 15 this year, held at Taidubari, 62 kilometres from Agartala, decided to launch an agitation seeking the deportation of "foreigners" who had come to Tripura after October 15, 1949 the day Tripura formally acceded to India. Such a demand had never been heard before, despite the fact that the immigrant Bengalis had made the tribals into a minority a long while ago. The programme for action was charted out: deputations to block development offices; a week-long boycott of the markets between June 1 and June 7; and a civil disobedience movement. The conference also urged the regional Parties of the north east to launch a "combined agitation throughout the region to root out the foreigners". The TUJS figures said that there were 10 million "foreigners" in the north east: 5.1 million in Assam and one million in Tripura. The organising secretary of the All Assam Tribal Youth League, Derhagre Mochahary, was the chief guest, Bharat Dewan presided. Among those who addressed the meeting was Vijoy Hrankhal, the self-styled commander of the 6,000-strong Tripura Sena. Another participant was Mrs Bibhu Devi, the second wife of Tripura's last Maharaja's eldest son, who was the chief guest at a cultural programme.

On March 23 the TUJS announced that the statewide agitation against foreigners would start on March 30. A joint action committee, which included Nagnendra Jamatia, MLA, and Vijoy Hrankhal, was set up to restore the balance which had gone wonky between the 1937 and the 1971 censuses: in 1937, 70 per cent of the population was tribal; in 1980, this had been virtually reversed and only 29 per cent was tribal.

On April, the TUJS asked Stanley Nicholas Ray, secretary of the Forum of Hill Regional Parties of North East India (their members are the APHLC of



Nripen Chakrabarty

Meghalaya, the People's Party of Arunachal Pradesh, the UDF of Nagaland, the National Party of Mizoram and the TUJS) to summon a meeting immediately to create a joint programme against "foreigners": the furthest date they suggested was May. The last meeting of the Forum had been held at Kohima on October 24, 1979, and the discussions there had clearly boosted the morale of the TUJS. The extremist and violent Sangkrak also became active simultaneously. Sangkrak owes its name to the

history of the early 1950s and its revival to Hrankhal. According to the Chief Minister of Tripura, slogans of independent Tripura were also raised by them. The Tripura Sena also became active. Again according to the CM, some Sena members had taken training in Bangladesh from Mizo hostiles.

By May 8, armed tribals had hit several villages and bazaars in South Tripura in which eight persons were killed. They struck terror along the Boromurha hill belt, cutting across south and west Tripura. Leaflets were left behind with the message: "Jungles are our strongholds".

On May 21, the Tribal Joint Action Committee of the TUJS announced that it would begin a movement in Tripura's hilly areas to purge "foreigners". On May 22, the Forum endorsed the TUJS stand on "foreigners": the TUJS was represented at this meeting by its secretary Shyamacharan Tripuri. And on May 25 and 26 a convention of the TUJS general body, after deliberations at Pitra in South Tripura, decided to introduce inner line permits, as in Nagaland, to curb "infiltration".

On the night of May 30, a gang of armed tribals attacked a house at Jamirghat in Sidhai killing a housewife, and injuring her husband and one other person. Other attacks resulted in the deaths of two women and a child. The BSF and the Tripura Armed Police, along with other security forces, began combing operations. Then came the bandh, starting on June 1. And that began another story.

AN APPEAL

Tripura has witnessed the worst tragedy in its existence. Thousands have been hurt in some way or the other. Lakhs have lost everything they had. Out of a total population of about 19 lakhs, more than three lakhs are already in refugee camps (both Bengalis and tribals).

At this moment everything that can possibly be done to help these unfortunate victims of communalism must be done. We appeal to all our readers spread all across the country to help a severely affected group of people in any way they can: by sending money, medicines, clothes or whatever else is possible. Please send your aid to any of the responsible agencies that may be involved in the relief and rehabilitation work in Tripura, or directly to the Tripura Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Editor and all the members of the staff of SUNDAY

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANYTHING TO OUR ADDRESS.

HRANKHAL : THE MAN WHO WANTED WAR

THE first reports said that he was headed for Bangladesh with a band of loyal followers. Then came the report. No, he was right there in his native village of Ambassa, 60 km east of Agartala on the Assam highway, collecting large quantities of rice and preaching communal amity. So on Saturday June 14, at around 5 p.m., a posse of policemen supported by a contingent of the CRPF moved into Ambassa. Within an hour Bejoy Kumar Hrankhal, 35, one of the most dreaded persons in Tripura, was arrested without so much as raising a finger. He almost seemed to have been waiting for it. When the news of his arrest reached the police headquarters in Agartala the initial reaction was one of disbelief. The person who had been harassing the police with his acts of violence and insurgency since 1967, the promoter of the *Sangrak*, *Tripur Sena*, *Tribal National Volunteers (TNV)* who went to the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh and forged a link with the MNF insurgents, giving himself up so easily? It is only after the message came late at night that Hrankhal had been lodged in a cell at Kamalpur police station that the officers managed to breathe a sigh of relief.

Ever since Hrankhal left his job or manager in the Adivasi Co-operative Society at Kanchanpur at the age of 22 to launch the Tripura Upajati Juba Samati (TUJS), he has been a constant headache for the police. First, he resurrected the dreaded *Sangrak*, then he raised the *Tripur Sena*, then the *TNV* then again the *Sangrak*. All with the same objective in mind, the liberation of the tribal areas of Tripura (which constitute about 60 per cent of the state) through insurgency. The TUJS hierarchy, composed mostly of the elders of different tribal communities, never approved of Hrankhal's views. Time and again they stripped him of his powers and positions. In March 1976, he was reduced from the position of the organising secretary to that of a joint secretary of the organisation. In the same year he also lost his post of director of the Tripura Tribal Language Institute, an outgrowth promoted by the local Baptist church to educate the tribals, but actually a convenient cover for all kinds of intrigues. By July 1977, he completely lost his standing in the official hierarchy and was virtually removed from the organisation. He remained in the Party just as a member of the toothless central advisory board.

But, luck has never deserted Hrankhal. He was lucky to be born into a Christian family. The Baptist missionaries gave him a good education, first at their school at Aiundhatinagar in Tripura, then at the junior high school in the Jampui hills on the western border of



Mizoram and finally in Shillong where he appeared for his Senior Cambridge from the classy Don Bosco. That made him an automatic choice for leadership in a community where very few were literate. His age was also a great advantage. It is the pressures from the younger activists that have prevented the elders in the TUJS from disowning younger Hrankhal completely.

Within a year of his near total eclipse Hrankhal again came into prominence in

the TUJS in 1978 because his services were requisitioned to raise the volunteer force *Tripur Sena* to reinforce the campaign for autonomy. He was made the chief organiser. But Hrankhal styled himself the C in C. Very soon, however, he fell foul of the leadership again. After the President of India gave his assent to the Autonomous District Council Bill Hrankhal decided to register his displeasure by printing a map in the *Tripura Star*, a bilingual tabloid published by him, exaggerating the actual area envisaged in the bill for the autonomous tribal district councils. This created hostility and raised fears among the Bengalis against the bill. The TUJS leaders saw in it a calculated move to whip up communal tensions.

At the meeting of the TUJS on August 5, 1979, the leaders accused Hrankhal of committing a breach of faith by publishing the map without the knowledge or the approval of the Party. Not content with that Hrankhal had in another issue of the *Tripura Star* published a list of likely TUJS nominees for the district councils of which the Party leaders knew nothing about. He was also accused of promoting a personality cult in the Party, projecting himself unduly in the *Sena*, forging links with the MNF insurgents without the consent of the Party, drawing money from the missionaries and squandering party funds. Hrankhal just sat silent as the elders demanded his expulsion from the Party. Only at the request of Harinath Deb Barma (now a TUJS MLA) did the leaders relent and agree to ask Hrankhal to submit his resignation. Hrankhal resigned. In the *Sena* he was replaced by Sukhdayal Jamatia, once his close associate. But even after that Hrankhal refused to actually relinquish charge. A stalemate followed.

Meanwhile, Hrankhal's supporters began canvassing for his reinstatement in the Party. He should at least get the post of assistant general secretary, they said. The leadership could not resist the demand although it strongly disapproved of Hrankhal's involvement in insurgency activity, his collaboration with the MNF.

The TNV card passport to violence



and, above all, his efforts to undercut the *Tripur Sena* by raising a parallel force, the *TNV*. He was made assistant general secretary but the leaders had by then lost all confidence in him. Then suddenly on February 16, Hrankhal in a surprise move met Chief Minister Nripen Chakrabarty at his office. The meeting led to the government dropping conspiracy charges against him and ordering the police not to arrest him although a warrant for it was outstanding. The immediate reaction of the leaders was that Hrankhal was buying safety at the cost of the TUJS.

That is why the TUJS leaders refused to include Hrankhal in the Party delegation to the North Eastern Regional Students' Union conference in Dibrugarh. He was left out from the action committee formed to implement the decisions of the Party's 12th annual conference which called for the deportation of foreigners. But when the TUJS intensified its campaign against 'foreigners' early this month, Hrankhal again became very useful to the party. His command of the *Tripur Sena* was restored to secure his help.

The government strongly suspect that Hrankhal had planned the recent carnages and massacre in Tripura. The TUJS leaders also blame him for most of the excesses. Both the president and the general secretary of the TUJS are said to have told the police that a small band of tribals had committed the massacres. "We did not have any fore-knowledge. But, we now Hrankhal is the man you are looking for.

But this he strongly denies. He is reported to have told the interrogators that he has renounced violence, sincerely and honestly. "That is since November last year when I got married to Linda (a 15-year-old girl of the same village.) How can you marry and be irresponsible? Violence means insecurity. And, I can no longer afford to live dangerously," he says. He admitted that he had met the MNF leader Laldenga several times in New Delhi. "But would you believe that the first thing he told me was that insurgency was not going to pay in the long run. I did not agree. But now looking back I guess, he was right," he thinks. Was he in any way associated with the recent killings and carnages? The question seemed to take him by surprise. "What carnage?" Didn't he know about the massacre at Mandai? "What happened there?" When he was told that some 300 men, women and children were killed he replies: "How terrible? It's bad. It's really bad..

Even after three days of interrogations, Hrankhal did not say anything that the government did not know already. He denied most of the charges of violence and insurrections. "No I had nothing to do with the, raids on police stations or the bazaars," has been his stock reply. But he is convinced that the CPI(M) is not the answer to the anxieties and agonies of the state's tribals. "The tribals alone can shape their own destiny, they alone can find solution to their problems"

T.P.



The Army looks for insurgents

THE BLOODSTAINED MILITANTS

ETHNIC insurgency first raised its head in Tripura within a year of its accession to India on October 15, 1949. The immediate provocation was the appointment of a Bengali ICS officer, A.B. Chatterjee, as the *dewan* to the state by the government of India. Although Maharaja Bir Bikram Deb Barma was among the first to accede his state to India, he died before the instrument of accession could be signed. Since his son Kirit Bikram was a minor, Maharani Kanchanprabha assumed charge as the regent and signed the document. The *dewan* appointed by the government soon became the de facto ruler of the state. The tribals, already bitter about the influx of Bengali immigrants which had reduced them to a minority and the end of the Maharaja's rule, boiled with rage as the *dewan* disarmed and disbanded the Royal Guards who had rendered some valuable services to the British on the Aarakan front during the World War II. The sacked Royal Guards formed a militant insurgent group named *Sangrak*, meaning the swordsmen or strongmen which they were, and joined the restless tribals preparing for an uprising under the banner of Ganamukti Parishad, dominated by the communists at Khowai where their leader Dasarath Deb Barma (the present Education Minister) lived. The insurgency kept the entire Khowai subdivision and a large part of the Sadar subdivision in turmoil for a long period even after the deployment of a large para-military force.

The *Sangrak* surfaced again soon after the emergence of the TUJS as a group of extremists led by its organising secretary Bejoy Kumar Hrankhal drawing inspiration from the Mizo insurgents, drifted away from the dominant moderate trend within the Party. A hostile Pakistan government willingly offered the group a sanctuary and training facilities at Keshab Mahajan Para just about 10 km away from the border in the Chittagong Hill Tracts where Mizo rebels were already training. Hrankhal himself led the first batch there through a point at Bhandarima, a virtually inaccessible village located at the tri-junction of Tripura, Mizoram and the then East Pakistan. At the training centre in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Hrankhal came in touch with the Mizo insurgent leaders with whom he forged an alliance.

Initially, the TUJS leaders were reluctant to have anything to do with the extremists. But towards the end of 1967 the TUJS leaders looking for reinforcement needed to intensify their campaign for autonomous councils in the tribal areas, sought to make up with the extremists. With this idea the then president of the TUJS, Drago Kumar Reang, and general secretary Shyamacharan Tripuri initiated a dialogue with the *Sangrak*. But the negotiations failed because the extremists did not want to renounce violence. A spate of violence followed. Hrankhal and his aide Sukhadayal Jamaita stepped up recruitments enlisting young men to *Sangrak* from Udaipur, Belonia and Amarapur. They also readily got support from the Reang tribe concentrated in the Kanchanpur area, who had been fuming over the settlement of Bengali refugees on lands reserved for them.

Between 1967 and 1968, the extremists carried out at least 24 raids at different parts of the state, mostly along the borders, to collect money and supplies. The *Sangrak* did not have any mass following and relied mainly on terror and the support of the MNF insurgents. But, by their acts of depredation they lost whatever little support they had among the people. Finally, the organisation crumbled after the security forces nabbed some of its members on their way to East Pakistan. The last of the group was caught by the BSF on November 14, 1968. And, the extremist activities ceased for some time. But the MNF took over, carrying out sporadic raids in places close to the Mizoram border. After about two years of hibernation, the extremists began to regroup in 1970 under a different label *Tripur Sena* for men and *Tripurasundari Sena* for women. But, before they could be organised sufficiently the 1971 war broke out, finally leading to the emergence of Bangladesh and the loss of the extremists' Chittagong Hill Tracts sanctuary. Another spell of hibernation followed. The MNF insurgents, however, continued to harass the Tripura government by carrying out frequent raids in and around the Chamanu area in Kanasahar subdivision in the 1972-75 period. The MNF was hoping that such insurgency would help revive the militancy of the Tripura tribals. And, it did.

In 1977 the extremists in the TUJS renewed their links with the Mizo underground. In November 1975, Hrankhal

told Brig Sailo in Aizwal how the Mizo community in Tripura was being harassed by the immigrant Bengalis. Seeking assistance of the Mizoram People's Conference, he argued that the only remedy was the establishment of an autonomous state comprising the Mizo populated areas of Mizoram, Tripura, Cachar and Manipur. Sailo, however, appeared cool to the idea and asked Hrankhal to present New Delhi a list of his grievances and demands. Again in September 1977, Hrankhal, this time accompanied by another extremist student leader Debabrata Kalai (now the TUJS publicity secretary), approached Brig Sailo and the Mizoram People's Conference general secretary Zoram Thunga at Aizwal for representation of the TUJS in the North East Hill People's Conference (NEHPC).

The extremists' cause received a boost with the intensification of the TUJS's campaign for autonomous district councils which brought it into direct confrontation with the ruling Left Front government in 1978. To sustain the campaign, the TUJS revived the *Tripur Sena* and placed it under the command of Hrankhal. Unlike the clandestine *Sangrak*, the new volunteer force promoted by the TUJS acted more openly and within legal limits. Consequently, it attracted more people. By the end of 1979 the strength of the *Tripur Sena* went up to 10,000 with its units spread all over the state. The expansion, however, cost the *Sena* much of its militancy which prompted the ultras to seek a new forum. This led to the birth of the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) towards the end of

1978. Hrankhal organised the TNV secretly behind the back of the TUJS leaders, drafting into it handpicked activists from the *Tripur Sena*. The objective was to raise a band of insurgents on the pattern of the MNF. This is reflected even in the choice of the name for the organisation. The word "national" is significant. The members of the TNV were given special identity cards bearing the photograph of the holder, his left thumb impression in his own blood and signed by Hrankhal as the general of the TNV. They also carried a separate card, again signed by Hrankhal, this time as the C-in-C of the *Tripur Sena*, to establish their bonafide within the *Sena* as well. The TNV volunteers used the *Tripur Sena* cards only while in Tripura. The TNV cards served as passports to Mizo camps in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Some 60 TNV members are so far known to have received training at the MNF camps in Bangladesh. The first batch was led by extremist leader Churnil Kalai to the MNF camp at Lungthaus in the Chittagong Hill Tracts close to the Arakan border. After the completion of their training, Kalai again led the batch back to Tripura. Initial understanding for cooperation between the TNV and the MNF was reached between Hrankhal for the TNV Khawkaung the commanding officer of the 'Z' battalion for the MNF. Later it was formalised in a series of meetings held between Hrankhal and the MNF leader Laldenga in New Delhi. At the meetings held on March 31, April 1 and April 2, 1979 another important MNF functionary, Lal Zuala was also present. While Hrankhal dealt mostly

with planning, Kalai did most of the field work.

The TNV's Mizo connection was laid bare when some documents seized by the police last October revealed that the MNF was pledged to offer arms, ammunition and logistical support to the TNV insurgents and even conduct joint raids. At least on ten occasions since March last year, the MNF collaborated with the TNV in organising armed raids on selected targets, mostly police outposts. The insurgency ebbed a little last November after 12 hardcore activists of the TNV had been arrested by the security forces. Its leaders, including Hrankhal, were forced underground as the documents seized from the arrested TNV members and the confessions made by them gave the government enough evidence to prosecute the leaders. The charges ranged from murder, robberies and arson to sedition. While still in underground the TNV leaders struck a political deal with the Left Front Chief Minister Nripen Chakrabarty in February this year as a result of which the government withdrew the sedition charges against some of the leaders (specific criminal charges were notwithstanding) and the leaders renounced violence. As part of the deal they also publicly announced the disbanding of the TNV. But secretly they continued to nurse it. Hrankhal hit upon a brilliant idea to circumvent the promise he had made to Chief Minister Nripen Chakrabarty. A change of label. And now read *Sangrak* again for TNV.

T.P.

HOW MANY DIED ?

IF the government says 350, then at least 3,500 people must have died" : how many times one must have heard this reaction! For obvious reasons, the number of dead and injured in a communal clash is the most sensitive statistic, and all governments have built up such a credibility gap. In his regard that no one, particularly those directly involved, believes a figure distributed by the authorities. So everyone, depending upon his or her political persuasion, emotion, or investigation, puts out a separate figure. In Tripura, the estimates range from the 400-odd figure touted by the government to the far more absurd 7,000 dead claimed by the anti-CPI(M) politicians of Tripura.

The authorities base their figures on the number of bodies recovered; indeed, doing anything else would be irresponsible. But the truth is that this makes for unreliable estimates. To begin with, the police simply do not have the capability to take a proper census of the number of dead in as widespread a riot as the Tripura one. Apart from the

deaths in the interior villages, all the bodies on the side of the main Agartala-Assam road had not been cleared by the time we went on June 13. On that day, we arbitrarily stopped at a roadside village in Bankimnagar under the Jirania police station. There, in front of a gutted, poor man's hut, was a skeleton, lying face up. The right fist was clenched, the left hand rested on the stomach. The right foot had been chopped off completely, but the left foot was still intact — the last bit of flesh on the body was on this foot. The skeleton was, on Saturday June 7, a man called Phulkumar Chaudhury, around 50 years old, with a family of wife and ten children — three sons and seven daughters. Sometime between three and four in the afternoon, Chaudhury had been killed during an attack by about 200 tribals. There were other victims of that attack, but Chaudhury's body was still lying there in front of his hut. Pradip Chaudhury, the teenage son of the skeleton, was wandering about on the road, the useless tears now dried up. He himself had managed to run away in time, but his mother, with two children, survived only

because they were able to hide in a bush all through the attack — barely five yards from the spot where the father was killed. The family saw it all.

Further down that road was also the body of a tribal killed by a police bullet: this was one place where the police came while the rioting was on. This death, too, had not gone onto police lists.

Moreover, not all the bodies would have been visible to the police even where they went. Many of the bodies were simply dumped by the assailants into ponds: others are buried under the ash of burnt villages. Every day, bodies are still being found floating down the Haora and Gomti rivers — both the Bangladesh and the Tripura governments have declared the waters of these rivers unclean because of this.

However, the body count cannot be dramatically more than what the authorities say it is. First, the only place where a massacre took place was Mandai; in no other spot has the death toll risen beyond 15 at the very most. Arson is really the greater source of damage, except, of course for Mandai.

M. J. A.

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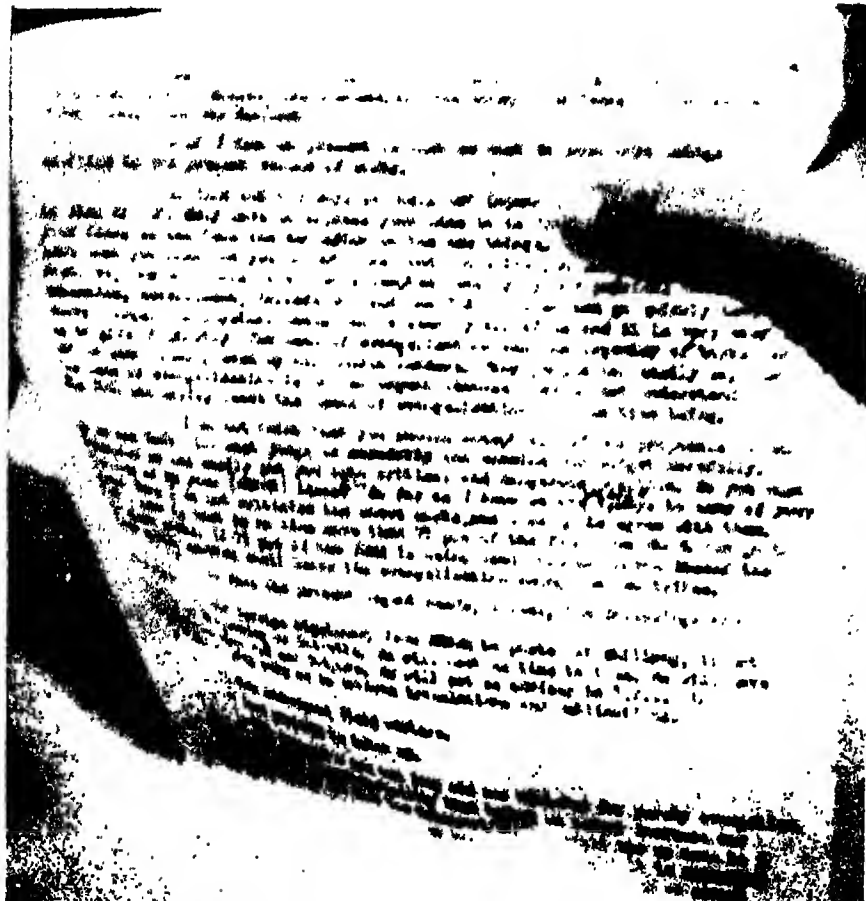
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polyester blend shirtings

THE CHURCH AND THE TRIBALS



Letter from Tripura Baptist Union to its counterpart in New Zealand, intercepted by the police

"The Tripuris accepted Hindus as brothers, now Hinduism appears to be a threat".

"Tripuris have today formed a party called Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti. This is led by young men and although in its early beginning was communist-minded, it has become nationalist, it has support of over 80 per cent of the Tripuris".

"I was able to meet the general secretary of the TUJS and to read a memorandum that his Party has submitted to the Government of Tripura regarding the mistreatment of the tribals by the Ben-

galees. The TUJS is demanding a separate district council for the Tripuris

"The political upheaval has made the tribals of Tripura receptive to the Gospel".

"If large numbers are to come to Christ via people's movement, the Tripura Baptist Christian Union must be aided by other churches and missions".

"I also strongly urge the pumping into Tripura of material supplies—jeeps, public address system, trucks and printing materials to be used by workers".

THESE are some of the quotes from a pamphlet entitled "The church grows through people's movement", circulating among the church authorities in north-east India. Its author, Dr. Rieweh Cunville, a director of the Bible Society of India argues in that pamphlet that the tribals of Tripura should be organised into an

unified Christian group taking into account their desire for more power and freedom. "They (the Tripura tribals) saw the tribals in the neighbouring states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya were enjoying more powers. Naturally, they want to go that way", Cunville asserts. His suggestions to the Christian missions all over the world : send your best workers to Tripura; intensify the conver-

sion activities; be in close touch with the Tripura Baptist Christian Union. Clearly, the church has been taking more than usual missionary interest in the tribals

The entire north eastern region of the country has been a major attraction for the Christian missionaries since the early 19th century. Their targets : the tribal population. Although, in Tripura, the missionaries first established contact with the tribals some ninety years ago, they could not make much headway because the Hindu tribal Maharaja would not allow them a foothold. After tenacious efforts, a New Zealand Baptist missionary, Dr. D. N. Ead finally succeeded in securing permission from the Maharaja to open a mission in Tripura, promising that the missionaries would not preach Christianity to the Tripuris, the dominant tribal group to which the royal family belonged. The New Zealand Baptist Christian Union was consequently set up at Arundhatinagar in Agartala. The year : 1938. The very next year the missionaries registered some success by getting into their fold some Reang tribals following an abortive uprising by them. Till Independence, the missionaries were cautious, limiting their work mainly among the minor tribal groups and leaving out the major groups, as stipulated by the Maharaja.

With the accession of Tripura to India in 1949, the missionaries became more aggressive, going back on their promise not to preach Christianity among the dominant tribal groups. They started telling the tribals that they were being swamped by the dominant Hindu religion and culture, and that their salvation lay in embracing Christ. As a proof of it, the missionaries would refer to the Christian converts of the neighbouring tribal areas, the Mizos, the Nagas, the Khasis and other tribes pointing out how well off they were because they had embraced Christ. Compared to the tribals of Tripura, other tribes in the adjoining areas certainly appeared more articulate. That led many in Tripura to change their faith, especially those belonging to the Lushai (Mizos), Halam, Kuki, Garo and Darlong tribes. The technique adopted for Tripura was no different : the converts were offered education in English to mould their life-style on the western pattern.

By 1972 the activities of the New Zealand Baptist Christian Union started causing deep anxiety to the government. Evidence established its links with the TUJS, a tribal organisation that had surfaced in 1967. Rev B. K. Smith, the Director of the Bible Institution of the mission was found to be pleading the cause of the Mizo rebels with the tribals of Tripura. Indeed, he seemed to be working to unite various ethnic groups of the region to a common cause, and even lent his support to the Mizo National Front's idea of an independent tribal state incorporating all the tribal areas of the north-east in the scheme. Rev Smith was thrown out of Tripura in 1972 along with other foreign nationals employed in the mission following the promulgation of the restricted area rules prohibiting presence of foreign nationals in Tripura

without explicit permission of the government.

That, however, did not affect the activities of the mission (now renamed Tripura Baptist Christian Union) very much because Rev Smith and his colleagues, anticipating such an eventuality, had been raising a loyal band of followers from among the tribals for quite some time. The mission was placed in the hands of the local people, Rev. Smith guiding the activities from his new address in Calcutta till his departure from India in 1977. It is not surprising that the top functionaries of the TBCU belong to the Mizo tribe. Obviously, this is to emphasise the ethnic affinity of the Tripura tribals to the tribal population of the bordering state of Mizoram. Existence of a strong link between the Baptist missionaries and the MNF was always suspected. The confirmation came when a tribal recruit trained in the MNF camp in the Chittagong hill tracts confessed recently to the police that he had actually been guided to the camp by a Baptist pastor. Another recruit volunteered that the training at the MNF camp begins with an oath administered by a Christian missionary. "We have to swear our allegiance to the cause by touching the Bible," he is reported to have said.

But, perhaps the most positive proof of the church's involvement in politics in Tripura was offered by a letter written by the North East India Christian Council based in Shillong, to the TUJS MLA Drao Kumar Reang. It said: "We are thrilled to see the increased interest of our church members in politics. I should say, this is a new development and for the first time the church in Tripura has shown interest and taken part in politics". What thrilled the NEICC is the success of four TUJS candidates in the 1977 Assembly polls. Indeed, the letter presented a long list of names, whom the NEICC considered "our men" who have infiltrated into various organisations and bodies from the village panchayats to the Assembly. In another communication the TBCU informed its parent body in New Zealand that a large number of the church members had taken to politics - prominent among them were: Bejoy Kumar Hrankhal, Drao Kumar Reang, Chuni Kalai.

Presumably encouraged by this, the parent body in New Zealand decided to increase its contributions to the TBCU. The TBCU, which had been running on a shoestring budget till about 1977, suddenly started receiving large funds from various Christian missions all over the world. At present it receives Rs 10,00,000 annually from its parent body in New Zealand alone through commercial banks. A letter written by the New Zealand mission to the TBCU and intercepted by the government indicated that some of this money has definitely come from unidentified sources in Texas and London. The TBCU is also receiving funds from the Baptist Mission in Mizoram to the tune of Rs 150,000 annually. The Mizoram mission, incidentally, depends for its finances on contributions from the UK. Other contributors to the TBCU are: the Christian Educational and Evangelical Fellowships of India, New Delhi; Churches Auxiliary for Social Action, Silchar; Independent Church of India, Manipur; Bible Discipleship Cen-

tre, New Delhi; the World Vision of India, Madras.

Where are these funds used? One place is the schools run for the tribals with the active cooperation of the militant elements in the TUJS. Originally, the schools offered education in the tribal lingua franca, the Kokborak. But, gradually, they turned into English medium schools. And, many see in the recent TUJS demands for the adoption of the Roman script for the tribal language the invisible hands of the TBCU. There are also distinct signs to suggest that one major objective of the education being offered to the tribals is to forge an emotional link with the tribals of the neighbouring areas.

A strange kind of tie-up binds all the church organisations of north-eastern India. For example, the Tripura Baptist

Christian Union has its moorings in New Zealand, while the Mizoram Baptist Mission gets money and instructions from the UK. All these Baptist missions in the north-eastern region however, have a common forum in the North East India Christian Council with headquarters in Shillong. The Council is again affiliated to Billy Graham's World Baptist Alliance. Not without reason, therefore, many suspect the north-east Indian churches having links with the CIA, although such links are yet to be established beyond any reasonable doubt. The CIA is known to have been utilising the services of the missionaries for its clandestine intelligence operations. Whether the north-east Indian churches are being used by them or not, the fact remains that some of the churchmen are certainly meddling in politics.

WHO'S WHO IN TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

BUDDHA CHANDRA DEB BARMA, 56, a tracer in the SDO's office who rose to become a clerk in the agriculture department, left his job in 1967 to launch the TUJS. A member of the dominant Tripuri tribe, he has been particularly active in organising the Tripura Upajati Karmachari Samiti, the employees' front and the Kokborak Sahitya Sabha, the cultural front. He became president of the organisation after his predecessor Drao Kumar Reang was elected to the Assembly in 1977. His weakness: his second wife, a Bengali who is said to have immigrated after 1971. Views: moderate.

SHYAMACHARAN TRIPURI, 36, general secretary of the TUJS since 1969, is one of the most educated and articulate persons in the organisation. An Arts graduate, he served as an assistant teacher in a senior basic school till 1974. Since the birth of the Party he has been associated with all major policy decisions and negotiations, having represented the Party in the NERSU conference in Dibrugarh and the meetings of the NERHPP at Kohima and Shillong. His image, however, was sullied when he lost the Assembly election in 1977 from a tribal constituency to the CPI(M) candidate by a staggering margin of 10,000 votes. Views: moderate.

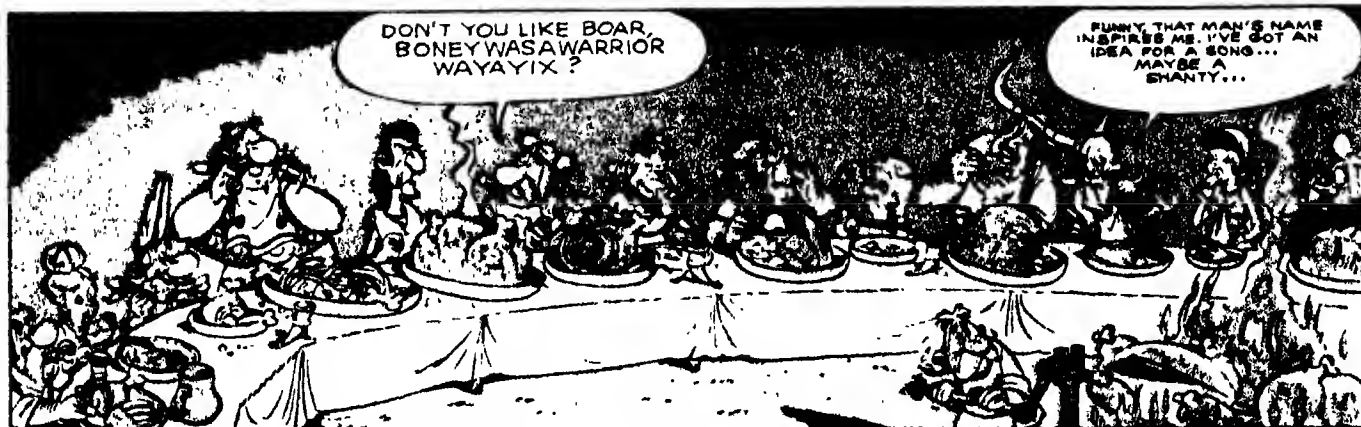
HARINATH DEB BARMA, 34, again a Tripuri, is the vice-president of the Party and comes from a fairly affluent family of Agartala. He is one of the four TUJS members to win the Assembly polls. A B.A., B.T., he is a school teacher. But more important, he forms a kind of bridge between the younger extremists and the elderly moderates within the Party and on a number of occasions he saved the party from being split. Views: moderate with a tilt towards the militants.

DRAO KUMAR REANG, 39, the leader of the TUJS Legislature Party in the Assembly, is its founder President, a post which he held till 1977. A graduate, he was serving as a clerk in

the PWD department till 1965 when he took up wholetime politics. Originally an extremist (he, with Hrankhal, had fomented a tribal uprising at Kanchanpur in 1967-68), he has changed a lot and is now considered a moderate. But his links with the extremists are still strong.

SUKHDAYAL JAMATIA, 48, is known more as a *jatra* actor and singer than a political activist. People still fondly call him *masterbabu* although he left acting as far back as in 1969 to join the TUJS. He has been a very close associate of the extremist leader Hrankhal ever since he joined the Party and helped Hrankhal raise insurgent bands. It is only in 1979 that they fell apart when the TUJS leaders sacked Hrankhal from the post of the chief organiser of the *Tripur Sena* and named Sukhdayal as the replacement. Sukhdayal couldn't exercise an effective control over the *Sena* and the present rumours are that because of this the TUJS leaders rehabilitated Hrankhal to the office just a few days before the recent disturbances. Views: extremist and particularly intolerant of the immigrants. The police say that he himself was seen leading the rioters at Teliamura, his native town, on June 9.

CHUNI KALAI, 36, is another leader of the extremists in the Party who became the closest confidant of Hrankhal after Sukhdayal changed sides. In 1979 he led a TNV group to the Chittagong Hill Tracts for training in the MNF camps and for all practical purposes has been the chief executioner of Hrankhal's action plans. When Hrankhal renounced violence after a meeting with the Chief Minister in February this year Chuni became Hrankhal's alter ego. Since his student days he has been very active in agitational politics and has been the leader of many violent demonstrations including the one before the state secretariat in 1977 in which a number of persons were hurt following a police lathi charge.



DON'T YOU LIKE BOAR,
BONEY WAS A WARRIOR
WAYAYIX?

FUNNY, THAT MAN'S NAME
INSPIRES ME. I'VE GOT AN
IDEA FOR A SONG...
MAYBE A
SHANTY...



YES, I LIKE BOAR...
BUT I CAN SEE
YOU'RE JUST
OFFERING IT TO
ME OUT OF
PITY.

NOT A
BIT OF
IT!



IF YOU DON'T
WANT IT, I'LL
TAKE IT OFF
YOUR HANDS...

I HAVE UPSET
YOU. YOU'RE
PROUD AND
TOUCHY. I LIKE
YOU, LITTLE
MAN.



VERY WELL, I'LL EAT THIS BOAR.

YOU'VE UPSET
ME NOW ALL
RIGHT!

TELL US
ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY,
BONEY WAS A
WARRIOR WAYAYIX.

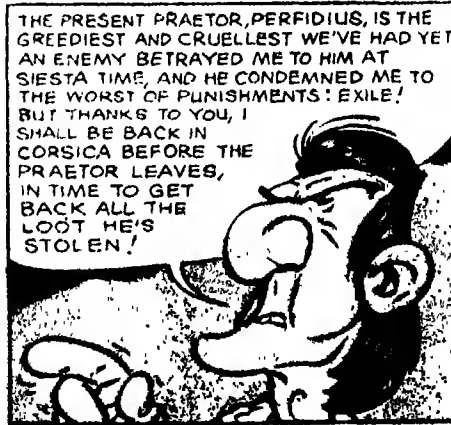


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RANSACKS CORSICA, CLAIMING
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REALLY WANTS TO BE IN
RILLIUS CAESAR'S GOOD
BOOKS WHEN HE RETURNS
TO ROME.

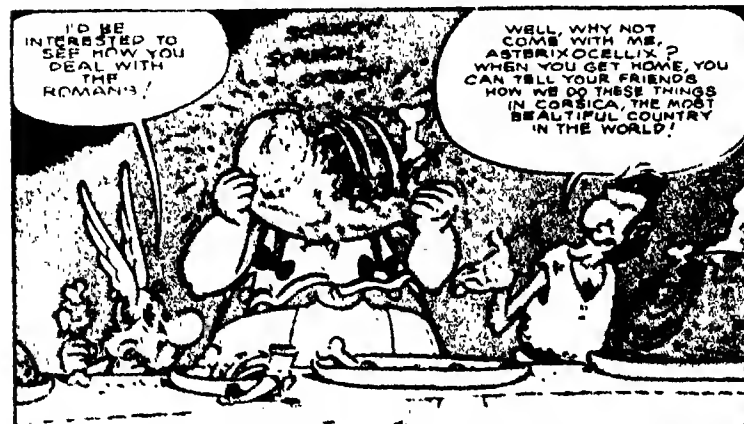


FOR
PITY'S
SAKE, A
BOAR!

BUT BEFORE THE
PRAETOR LEAVES, I AND
MY MEN GET BACK
EVERYTHING HE HAD IN
HIS WAREHOUSE.
SO FAR CARGAR'S ONLY
HAD PEANUTS OUT
OF US... NOT EVEN
ONE OF OUR CORSICAN
CHESTNUTS.



THE PRESENT PRAETOR, PERFIDIUS, IS THE
GREEDIEST AND CRUELLEST WE'VE HAD YET.
AN ENEMY BETRAYED ME TO HIM AT
SIESTA TIME, AND HE CONDEMNED ME TO
THE WORST OF PUNISHMENTS: EXILE!
BUT THANKS TO YOU, I
SHALL BE BACK IN
CORSICA BEFORE THE
PRAETOR LEAVES,
IN TIME TO GET
BACK ALL THE
LOOT HE'S
STOLEN!



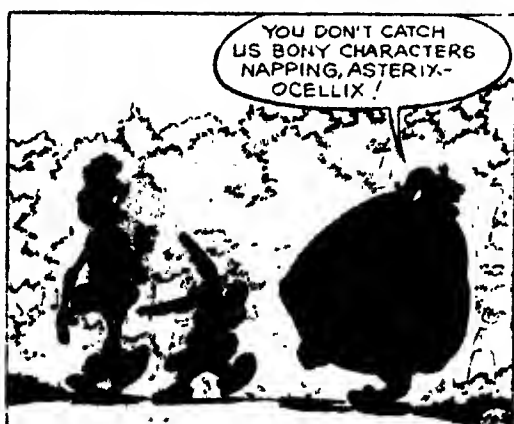
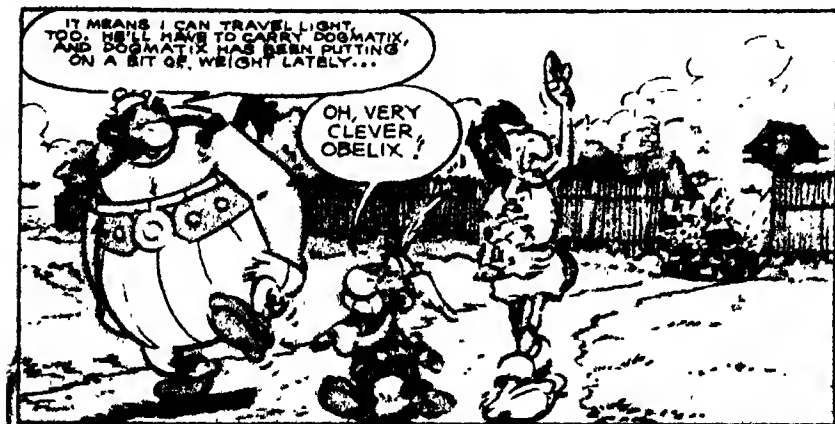
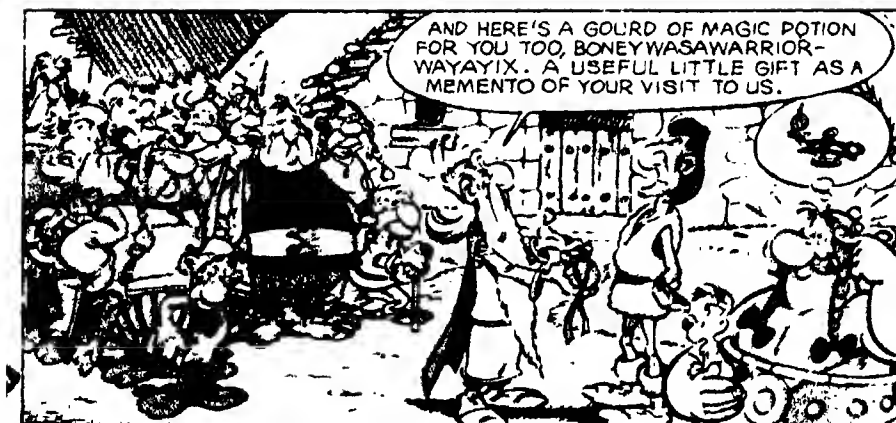
I'D BE
INTERESTED TO
SEE HOW YOU
DEAL WITH
THE ROMANS!

WELL, WHY NOT
COME WITH ME,
ASTERIXOCCELLIX? WHEN
YOU GET HOME, YOU
CAN TELL YOUR FRIENDS
HOW WE DO THESE THINGS
IN CORSICA, THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY
IN THE WORLD!



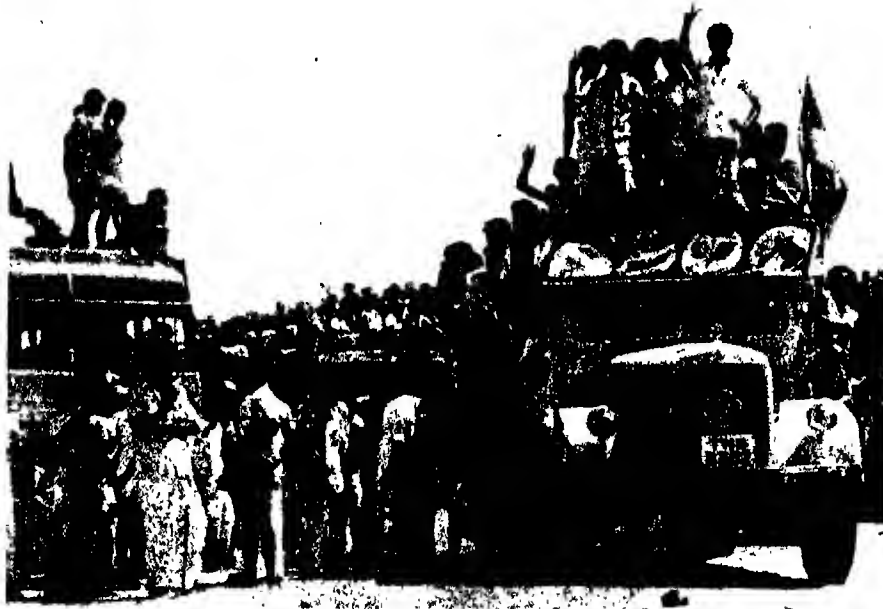
YES, BUT NOT
JUST YET. I NEED
A NAP FIRST.

COME TO MY
ARMS, LITTLE MAN!
YES, I REALLY
DO LIKE YOU!



Back in action

MGR's popularity has not waned



MGR supporters at the rally

ON June 9, most of the trains from South arrived at Madras several hours behind schedule due to thousands travelling on the roof who came to witness the swearing-in-ceremony of MGR and watch the subsequent pledge taken before Anna's statue. Even air-conditioned coaches and first class compartments were packed. And despite the repeated warnings by the Railway Police hundreds perched on footboards and sat astride between the compartments. Fearing electrocution from traction lines power was cut between a few stations. According to a moderate estimate over a lakh of MGR admirers poured into the city from all over Tamil Nadu, parts of Karnataka and Kerala. They came by trains, buses, taxis, private cars and even bullock carts. Some of the enthusiasts walked a distance of 25 km oblivious of the scorching sun.

A volley of slogans eulogizing MGR started to rend the air from the early hours of the morning. The crowd also denounced some of MGR's ex-colleagues who had deserted him on the eve of the election. Ex-Finance Minister K. Manoharan received the worst of the verbal abuses. Over 100 loud-speakers installed outside the Kalaivanar Arangam Hall helped his fans follow the proceedings inside the Hall. The oath-taking ceremony was over by one pm: there were speculations whether MGR would take the oath in the name of God. A few days before the function, MGR had surprised everyone by worshipping at the well-known Mookambika temple in Karnataka. That was the first act of public

worship by the actor-politician who had shunned the name of God in all his films for the last three decades and whose AIADMK Party prided itself in its rationalist (atheistic) tradition. But neither MGR nor any other Minister, took the oath in the name of god or the conscience. They just solemnly affirmed to uphold the constitution.

Five hundred yards away from the venue of the swearing-in-ceremony, several thousands of men, women and children squatted patiently for hours around the Anna statue where MGR was to take his second, and according to him, a more important oath. "It is you who have brought us this victory", MGR told the over zealous crowd driving his way to the special rostrum in an open van. "And we appeal to you to guard us in our march

towards establishment of an egalitarian society, enunciated by late Anna", he added. The police had a tough time in arranging first aid for more than a hundred who fainted under the burning sun. Nearly 50 people were injured when a wall collapsed. But despite these problems, the pledge taking and subsequent felicitation programme went on smoothly. As MGR waved at random he showed two fingers: the two fingers denote the AIADMK symbol: two leaves.

Throughout the day several slum-dwellers stood by the roadside offering water to the parched throats of people who were coming into the city. Rasheeda Bhagat, the sprightly reporter of an English daily, saw unemployed 19-year-old Venugopal, distributing free Moar (butter milk) to anyone who desired it. "The unwashed glass, the teeming files, were all gulped", she recalls. "No amount of screwing up of the nose would do. So what was offered in good spirit was accepted as such, to tell the tale..." The women came to the city with cooked food, and a variety of garlands. Of course, they could not go anywhere near their hero-politician, but once the function was over, they marched near MGR's well-guarded residence and handed them over to his security guards.

Most of the crowd stayed back to attend the felicitation function on the spacious Marina beach. MGR was once again cheered when he declared that Tamil Nadu would not tolerate the tendency of the Centre to treat Tamil Nadu as a Panchayat or Municipality. Opposition to the Centre would not be blind but based on specific issues: if Hindi was sought to be imposed, Tamil Nadu would fight tooth and nail. At the same time MGR thanked Mrs. Gandhi for not foisting cases against him although she had all the power to do so. "Even after my dismissal, she did not describe me as a corrupt leader", remarked MGR amidst thunderous applause. Photographers covering the events were surprised to note the relaxed mood of the Chief Minister. On previous occasions the photographers had received rough treatment from his Security Guards who used to insist that he should be photographed only from certain angles.

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

Better flight in sight

IA decides to be nice

"INDIAN AIRLINES has come a long way," said Mr A. K. Sivanandan, Senior Public Relations officer, Indian Airlines, Delhi, while explaining the new facilities introduced by the Airlines recently. Among these facilities which mark a general improvement in services, is dinner to be served in all Airbus night flights from July. This facility

is being introduced as two additional ovens are being installed in the galleys of Airbus aircraft. "The advantage is that the Airbus has load capability and therefore it has been possible to introduce this facility," added Mr Sivanandan. And, of course, there will be 'welcome drinks' — fruit juices — served to all passengers on entry into the aircraft.

These facilities are not going to be limited to passengers travelling by the Airbus only, maintain the

Airlines officials. Dinner facilities will also be started on Boeing 737 flights "as soon as galley capabilities are improved" and the old Boeing 737 aircraft are modified to conform to the new Boeing 737 galleys. The engineering department of Indian Airlines has already started work on the old Boeing 737 galleys and expect to complete it in the next six months. The quality of the food served is also expected to improve. Now, the total bill on catering amounts to Rs 5.5 crores.

The Airlines has other plans too. For one thing, the chairman has said that the Airlines expects in its next winter schedule to provide "commuter facilities" between a larger number of cities, enabling passengers to return home the same day after completing a day's business at the other end. This would have a two fold effect: it will enable officials to stay away from their desks for the shortest possible time and would also save on hotel expenses. The "commuter facility" would start by the end of this year when the capacity of the Airlines would increase by 30 per cent with the addition of two Airbus and four Boeing aircraft. Again, Indian Airlines has applied to the Government for setting up high frequency wireless communication between major stations. This is essential because often telephone communication gets bogged down or out of order due to rains or other reasons. It has also established ground-to-air and air-to-ground communication at eight stations on its network—Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Banaga, Orem, Trivandrum and Srinagar.

But in spite of all this Indian Airlines troubles continue. "Everything is in the doldrums today after the fuel price hike," said Mr Sivanandan. The recent price hike of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) by Rs 1,100 per kilolitre has pushed up the price to Rs 3,645 per kilolitre. This rise by 50 per cent in fuel costs will push up the annual fuel bill of the Airlines by another 45 crores from the present fuel bill of Rs 90 crores at the present level of operations. An Airbus consumes nearly 7.7 kilolitres of fuel per hour, while a Boeing 737 consumes 3.8 kilolitres (3,800 litres) per hour. "Obviously, we cannot run the Airlines if the fares are not increased. As a matter of fact we have approached the Government and Indian Airlines fares are expected to go up by 25 to 30 per cent. This rise is expected to be on a formula evolved by International Airtransport Association (IATA) which links the fare rise with the increase in the ATF cost," said Mr Sivanandan.

Another problem of the Airlines relates to its capacity. At present, getting a confirmation on a busy route is becoming increasingly difficult at short notice. Besides, of course, there are difficulties relating to punctuality and flight disruptions. All these relate to the fact that

there are much fewer aircraft than necessary to meet the demand of passengers travelling by air. For example, delays are largely caused by the fact that each aircraft in operation makes several flights in sequence everyday. A jet for instance, may operate on as many as six flights a day, involving as many as ten landings. A delay at any point would automatically mean that all the subsequent flights by the aircraft would also be delayed. The Airlines authorities intend to solve this problem by positioning standby aircraft at strategic points. This would obviously mean additions to the fleet of aircraft.

Indian Airlines, however, refuses to take the blame for disruption of services and delays in flight. Recently, while addressing a group of people in Bombay, the chairman of the Airlines, Mr Mehta, said that domestic aviation depends on a

variety of facilities on the ground, such as navigational facilities, landing aids, airport and terminal building facilities and even good roads from airports to the cities. "Would you be surprised if I tell you that most of the eastern region is blacked out after 4 p.m. for want of night-landing facilities? Would you also be surprised at the fact that the runways at our numerous airports are marginal in length and strength, so that we have to take considerable beating on the payload? Aurangabad permits no more than 75 passengers on a 126-seater Boeing, and Jaipur can barely make it with 90," he said.

In the final analysis therefore, in spite of the improvements which Indian Airlines has brought about in its flights, what remains to be seen is how it overcomes these problems.

SAUMITRA BANERJEE, Delhi

Blind surgery

Mistaken identity causes loss of eye



R. Vishwambharam

THE perfectly normal eye of R. Viswambharam, a 35-year-old casual labourer, was recently operated on at the Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Trivandrum. Unlike Nazreen Banu, of Hyderabad, it was not just the wrong eye, but the wrong person altogether. R. Viswambharam, who hails from a village south of Trivandrum was at the hospital visiting his wife Krishnamma, who had just undergone an eye operation. What followed next is best described in the words of the unfortunate victim: "When somebody shouted out whether any of Krishnamma's relatives were there, after her operation was over, I walked in. I thought that the doctor wanted to talk to me about my wife's condition. But, as I went in, the doctor immediately asked me to lie down on the operation table. Before I could ask her why she had asked me to lie down, the doctor asked me

whether I wanted her or some other doctor to operate on me. Even before I could say that I was not a patient or one earmarked for operation, the doctor had begun her work. The healthy eye was operated and I am now without a case sheet or other papers".

As it is difficult to operate on a person without the patient's cooperation he was naturally asked why he did not protest. While he told the Press correspondents that he thought the doctor might have been removing some part of his eye to be grafted on to his wife's eye, he told the enquiry officer that he had indeed protested and had told the doctor that he was not the patient.

Dr Sumangala, the doctor who conducted the operation had a different story to tell. Among the ten operations scheduled for the day, one Vishwanatha Pillai was to be operated on for "pterygium" of his left eye. As usual the attendant shouted out the name of Vishwanatha Pillai. A man walked into the theatre who the doctor believed to have been Vishwanatha Pillai. He was asked to lie down, and his eye was examined. The operation was made after local anaesthesia. "The patient did not protest in any way, or resent being operated on", said the doctor.

Meanwhile, the incident assumed a new dimension. By a strange quirk of fate, it turned out that Viswambharam could have had pterygium in the operated eye, as the unoperated eye had symptoms of developing pterygium. His bandage has now been removed, and he is cured of the disease that afflicted his left eye. Nevertheless it does not seem that this development would save the doctor.

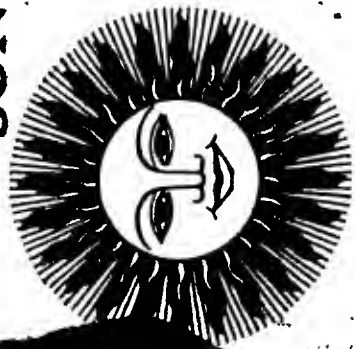
And all the while as the drama was going on in the operation theatre of the Ophthalmic Hospital, the real patient Vishwanatha Pillai, who was to have undergone the operation, lay in the ward,

G.S. KARTHA, Trivandrum

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

from
vibration
into
expression

SUN GRACE



At the very
zenith of
high fashion

FABRICS

from
WILLIAM
SUTHERLAND
&

Shoba's last film

For Balu this isn't the last act



Scene from *Moodupani*: Shoba and Pratap Pothan

"MOODUPANI (Mist) is a film specially made for Ammu (Shoba). For quite some months (before her death) both of us had a genuine fear that she was being typecast as a simple-minded, all-sacrificing plain Jane. And Shoba was longing to do a role that would present her in mod clothes, that would present her in a different light", says director-cinematographer Balu Mahendra. The film is slated for release in July all over Tamil Nadu. And at the moment Balu is going through a very difficult time. "Though the dubbing work of the film is completed, editing isn't done, and I find it a very painful experience to go through the process" Yet he would not hand over the editing to anybody. "The film was made with great care and deliberation: it is a sincere effort to project a new Shoba who incidentally wanted to be known as Shoba Mahendra after the film's release".

Moodupani is based on a Tamil novel by Rajendra Kumar and deals with the interaction between a young girl (Shoba), her love (Bhanuchander) and a psychopath (Pratap Pothan). Shooting began in January 1980, just around the time Balu revealed his 'marriage' to Shoba and was completed a few days before she ended her life. "Unlike so many films of Ammu which has sad endings, *Moodupani* has a pleasant climax: you may even call it the usual happy ending. In fact, the film opens with a pleasant, jolly song", says Balu. His past two films were written by him. But for his third venture he decided to use a published book. "Unlike in the cases of *Kokila* and *Azhitha Kolangal* (both previous films), with *Moodupani*, I often felt like an outsider. I did not know much about the subject to begin with. But I was confident that the film will work out well: I knew *Moodupani* had to be made fully depending upon my filmcraft..."

For the last three years Shoba invariably consulted Balu when she was offered a role. Similarly Balu also discussed his own assignments with her. "So *Moodupani* is a joint venture, the kind of joint ventures we would have continued making, had destiny not snatched my Ammu from me". Pratap Pothan who had a short role in Balu's silver jubilee hit *Azhitha Kolangal* (in which he was Shoba's lover) has a bigger role in *Moodupani*. He represents a character who has had a difficult childhood, whose mother was a prostitute and whose attitude towards women and society in general is highly prejudiced. Balu has also used a lot of "outside talents" like Calcutta's Vishwanath who plays the part of a police inspector.

Four of Shoba's films are awaiting release, and *Moodupani* seems to be the cynosure of all eyes. Some distributors initially had doubts about the film. They thought that Shoba's work in the film was incomplete and that every effort is now being made to organise a suitable and impressive release for the film which will be

dedicated to the late actress. And, unlike in the past, Shoba will be known as Shoba Mahendra in the credit titles.

(Incidentally, even the suicide note she left behind was signed as Shoba Mahendra).

"In all the recent contracts she signed, she used her 'new' name", says Balu. "She used to be so glad to be associated with my name". After the release of the film, Balu will start work on the Malayalam version of his Kannada hit *Kokila*. "Originally the film was to star Ammu and Pratap but now I'll have to work for a new heroine...It won't be easy directing the film; for, some of the most pleasant moments I experienced with Shoba while working for *Kokila* will come back to haunt me". Balu adds. Despite the efforts of some film people (who behave like guardians of public morality) to sabotage Balu's career, he is determined to go back to films. A number of offers have been made, and all the efforts of Shoba's embittered mother Prema and some of her filmland friends to malign Balu seems to have had little impact. "If I let myself sink and remain idle, Ammu's soul will be hurt. She wouldn't like me to be a defeatist".

ARTHUR PAIS, Madras

Helicopter Pawar

It works ... for some



The lucky helicopter

ON May 28 1980, with the first round of polling already over, most of the political leaders were somewhat jumpy. Mr Sharad Pawar, in a Press conference in Pune was trying, rather desperately, to convince the newsmen that the Congress (U) was going to make it in Maharashtra. Mr Pawar climaxed his argument by bringing out the one ace up his sleeve. He was using the same helicopter that had been used by Mr Jagjivan Ram and Mr Chandra Shekhar in 1977, and Mrs Gandhi in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections: 'And look what it has done for them'.

Apparently the Congress (U) boss was quite thrilled when he discovered the antecedents of the 15-year-old Bell 47 G2 three-seater. It was piloted by

Wing Commander K. Martin who when in the Indian Air Force, had been the VIP pilot and had not only flown Mrs Gandhi when she was the Prime Minister, but had also been recruited by her in the 1980 Lok Sabha poll.

Mr Pawar won at Baramati. But the Congress (U) as a whole cannot claim that the helicopter brought them much luck.

"The Congress (U) was lucky they got a helicopter, because all the others were out for agricultural spraying," says Phiroze Cama, of Cama Aviation Services, which owns the copter. "Actually we had promised it again to the Congress (I) and had reserved it for 14 days, but when they didn't come and Pawar's people were asking for it we thought it better to give it to the Sharad Pawar group. They took it from the 10th to the end of May."

Mr Pawar was wrong about one thing. This was not the copter that was used by Mrs Gandhi in 1980, was only the same pilot.

One would suppose, however, that with the regularity of elections Mr Cama would continue to find regular clientele for his Bell from the political Parties. And one would also suppose, more Parties mean more potential customers. And these are people who could certainly do with a little bit of luck by way of a lucky helicopter:

ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA,
Bombay

Generation gap

Who is to blame for the West Bengal crisis?



Load shedding in Calcutta's prestigious New Market

"LOAD shedding is a way of life for us", said a disgruntled Calcuttan who had just returned home from office and found that he had to climb ten storeys to his apartment because there was no power. In fact, over the last few months the situation worsened to such an extent that people all over the State, both supporters of the Left Front Government and non supporters, were thoroughly fed up. The Bengali daily *Anandabazar Patrika* commissioned the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) to conduct an opinion poll in May 1980 among residents of Calcutta on loadshedding. The poll revealed that the most acute problem faced by the people of the city was none other than loadshedding and referred to the suspension of the supply of electricity, at times for well over a couple of hours. Of the total respondents 63 per cent ranked it above problems like water shortage which the city is presently facing, rising prices and so on. The respondents believe that the problem is caused by negligence and the inefficiency of the personnel of the electricity board. It was also held that virtually no effort was being made towards the proper maintenance of the existing plants and equipment. But, many feel, the responsibility lay with the Government. Of the total respondents 39 per cent felt it was the present Left Front Government led by Chief Minister Mr Jyoti Basu, who should take the blame, 20 per cent felt that the present crisis was the doing of the erstwhile Congress Government while 80 per cent felt that it was the Centre who should be blamed.

Segregating the respondents into two groups: 'Left Front supporters' and 'Non-Left Front supporters', according to their voting pattern in the

recent Lok Sabha elections, yielded interesting results. Of the respondents 65 per cent felt that the Left Front was making an effort to resolve the crisis; an opinion voiced by 80 per cent of the Left Front supporters and 53 per cent of the non-Front supporters. While more than half (59 per cent) of the total respondents felt that the Centre was not doing much to help solve the problem, 67 per cent of the Left Front supporters and 54 per cent of the non-Left Front supporters held a similar view.

Is the West Bengal Chief Minister responsible for the deplorable power situation? No, said 52 per cent of the total respondents, 63 per cent of the Left Front supporters and 31 per cent of the non-Left Front supporters. Interestingly enough, 30 per cent of the Left Front supporters said 'Yes' to the same question.

It was widely held (by 74 per cent) that Mr Basu was making some effort to resolve the crisis, but while 20 per cent were convinced that the Chief Minister should acknowledge his responsibility and resign about half of the total respondents were doubtful that the appointment of a new Minister would solve the crisis.

The survey was conducted among 500 male and female adults aged 21 years and above and confined to the Calcutta municipal area. A two stage sampling method was used. In the first stage, 40 addresses were randomly selected from the electoral rolls. The names of all the adult members belonging to the addresses were listed in ascending order of age. The list so formed, provided the sampling frame for the second stage which involved the selection of respondents. Every fourth member on the list was selected for the interview.

Below are a few tables which emerged from the survey:

In your opinion, what is the most serious problem that Calcutta faces? Any others?

	All respondents
Load-shedding	63
Transport	42
Escalating prices	34
Unemployment	25
Water supply	21
Foodstuffs	18
House rents	14
Dirt/Garbage	13
Overcrowding	6
How many hours of load-shedding in a day do you have in your area?	

	All respondents
Up to 3 hours	7
4-6 hours	26
7-10 hours	32
Over 10 hours	35
Average (hours)	9.0

What do you think are the reasons for load-shedding and the current power crisis? Any others?

	All respondents
Governmental mismanagement	17
Corruption	1
Labour unrest	5
Faulty/old equipment	26
Politics/political rivalry	17
Inadequate investment	2
Unskilled workers	2
Government's lack of foresight	2
Engineers do not work	13
Officers do not work	9
Workers do not work	24
Demand of power exceeds supply	40
Lack of coal/fuel	5
Lack of foreign spare parts	1
Non co-operation among the workers	5
Poor maintenance of machinery	9
Irregular distribution of electricity	4
Industries consume heavily	1
Power is sent to villages	2
Lack of water	2
Wastage of electricity	3

In your opinion, who is more responsible for the present state of load-shedding — the present State Government or the previous (1977) State government?

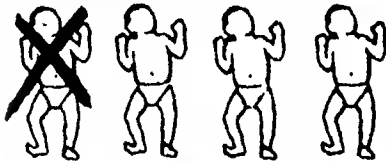
	All respondents
Left Front government	38
Congress government	26
Both equally responsible	29
Can't say	7

Do you think that the Central government is responsible in any way for the problem?

	All respondents
Centre is responsible	80
Centre is not responsible	14
Can't say	6

The boom that spells doom

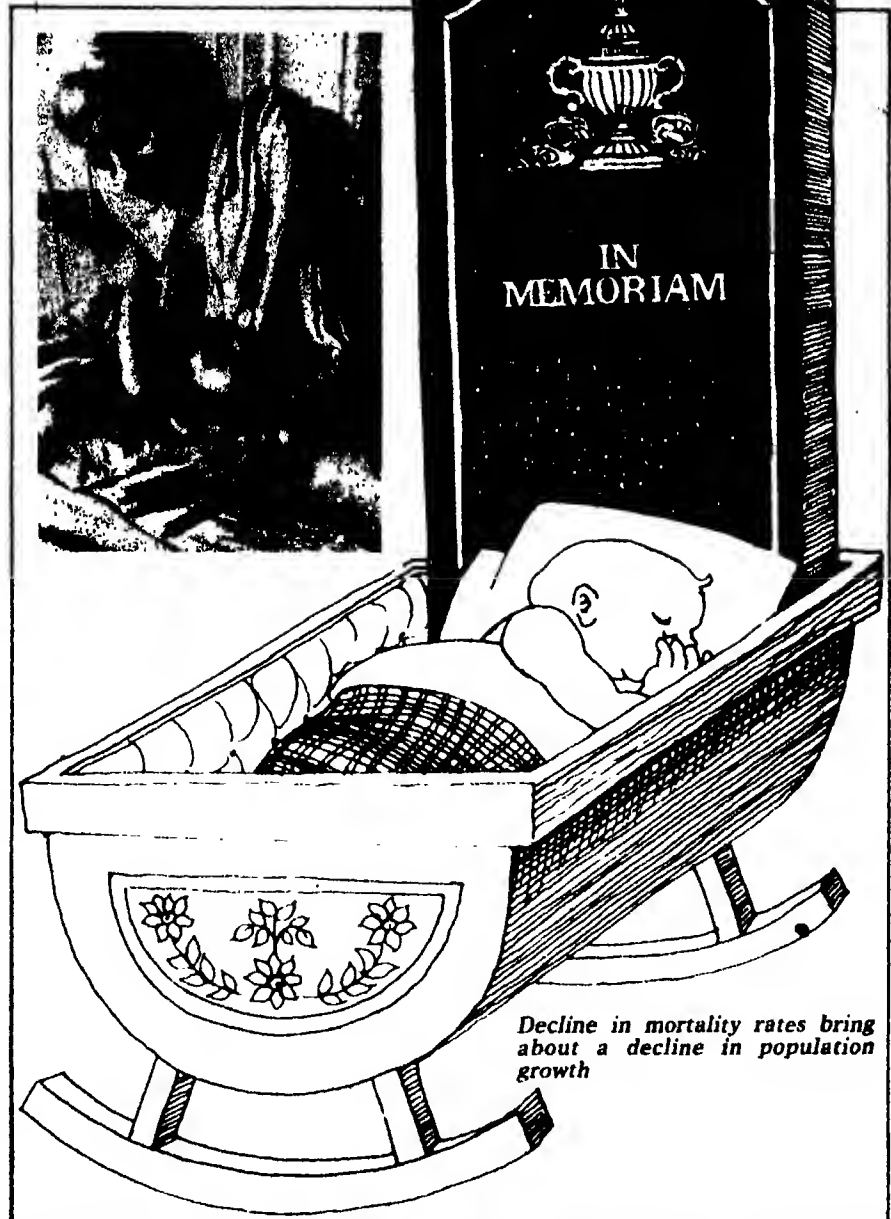
Of 11 babies born in the world everyday, ten are in undeveloped countries



AS you read this at the end of the day, do you realise that a third of a million babies were born today in the millions of villages, towns and cities of the world? And do you know that ten out of every 11 of the births took place somewhere in the undeveloped world? This in face of the decreasing rate of world population growth. Says Rafael M. Sales, the executive director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities while talking about the state of world population growth in the State of World Population Report of 1980: "In the decade of the 1980s the decline in world activity will continue noticeably. The United Nations has estimated that the annual average rate of growth of world population would decline from about two per cent in the mid-1960s to about 1.8 per cent in the early 1980s..."

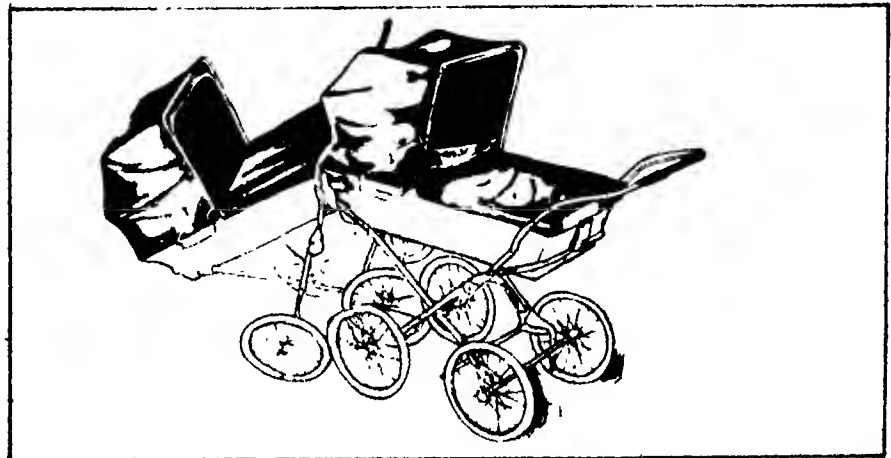
The question is why in spite of economic prosperity in the less developed countries the rate of growth of population has not declined as it has in the affluent nations. This is primarily because tradition bound people of the less developed countries have not succeeded in altering the pattern of births in keeping with the decreasing mortality rates. In the affluent nations, the decrease in infant mortality rates was closely followed by a decrease in the birth rate. This phenomenon has not been observed in the less developed countries. According to S. L. Rao the noted Indian demographer, "Demographers are more and more convinced that (the) improvement in health conditions and the consequent jump in the population is a prerequisite for an eventual decline in fertility rates". But by all "practical considerations it is easier to reduce the number of deaths than the number of births, at any rate in the short run". The "immediate effect is the growth in numbers experienced in many parts of the developing world".

The growth in population has had effects. There has been a steady march towards the cities. In fact the report says that the urban population of the world has doubled since 1950. If the trend continues, as so many of us in India are aware of, by the end of the next two decades half of the Southern world will be urbanised. Cities will naturally be born with rapidity. By the year 2000 there will be 60 giant cities with over five



Decline in mortality rates bring about a decline in population growth

If one child is born too soon after another, then the health of both mother and child is undermined



million inhabitants and 45 of these metropolises will be in the developing world. These seem to be hopeful prerequisites of advancement for the developing world. But there is a catch. It has to be remembered that there is a direct relationship of the rate of growth of population with the economy of the world.

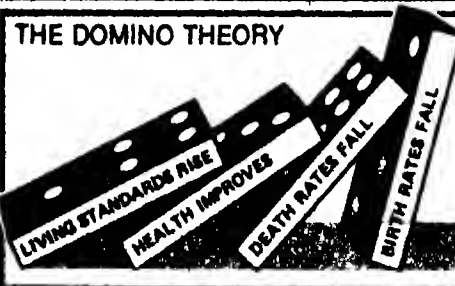
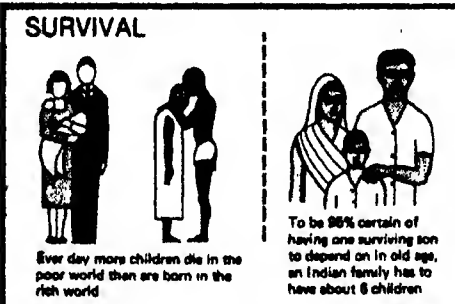
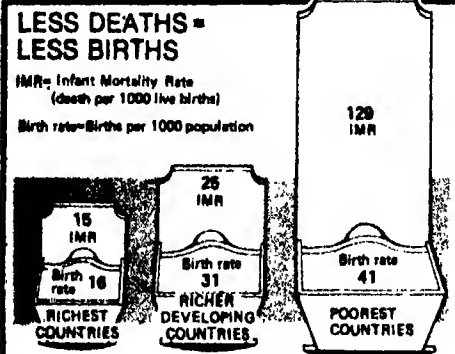
One disturbing factor is that the resources of the world are not distributed in a ratio almost equal to the population distribution. By the end of the century, 59 per cent of the world's total population will be in Asia, 11 per cent in Africa, 13 per cent in Latin America and only 17 per cent in the other industrialised countries. But the rich are learning to live in a richer mould. "The United Kingdom alone spends a billion pounds a year on advertising to increase consumption. USA spends ten times that figure. Without any increase the rich world already consumes 85 per cent of world energy, 70 per cent of the world's foodgrains. And such inequalities are worsening", says Anuradha Vittachi reporting on the consumption explosion. It is no wonder then that Mr Salas warns that "population growth is a problem only when resources cannot meet the needs of the people". And it is not for nothing that the Third world Countries are asking for a redistri-



People are migrating to the cities at a fast pace

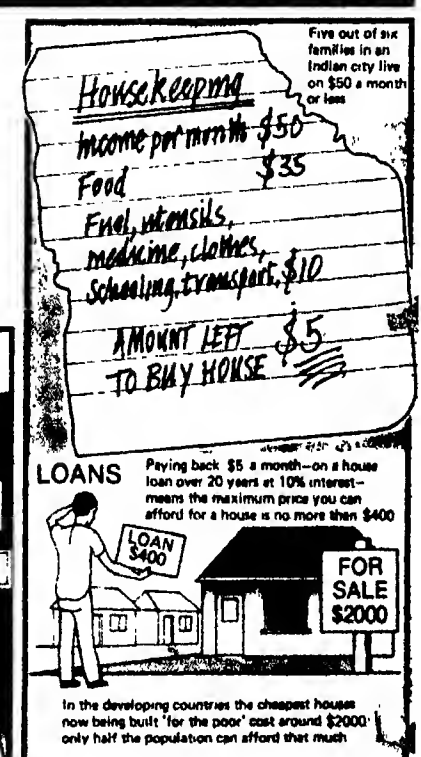
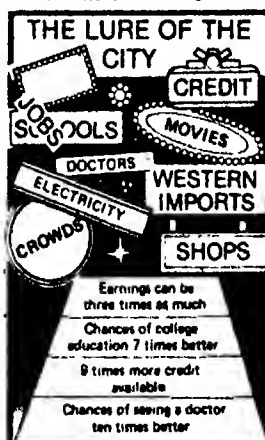
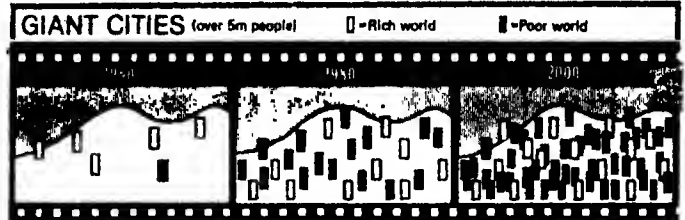
The Cradle and the Grave

"The lower the death rate, the greater the likelihood of the population growth rate falling" 1980 "State of World Population Report" (UNFPA)



Half the World in Cities

We are now seeing the greatest mass migration in human history. -the trek to the cities





women attending a talk on family planning in Sri Lanka

bution of opportunities for future economic progress more than a mere transfer of present wealth from rich to poor countries.

A closely linked phenomenon is what can be termed the Aspiration Bomb. Of the 125 million babies born every year each one of them "is a bundle of aspirations". Born and nurtured on these aspirations the desire to fulfill them will become "the most dynamic and unpredictable force in world affairs in the coming years". Says Anuradha Vittachi that this force "will take its toll not only on the environment but on the chances of improving the quality of life for the world's poor majority".

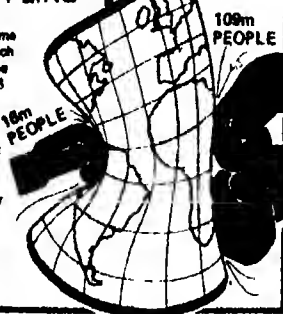
The key to the solution lies in the population programmes. For every five birth in the world there are now two abortions. This is evidence that there is need for avoiding unwanted pregnancy. Planning a family is essential for an improved quality of life. This is one reason why the UN Fund for Population Activities has asked for one billion dollars for international population assistance by 1984. "Whatever is done now about population and development will determine the living conditions and opportunities for unborn generations of the next century," says Mr Salas.

The Aspiration Bomb

"While the so-called population bomb may have been de-fused the aspiration bomb has not" -1980 'State of World Population' Report (UNFPA)

THE PUNCH LINE

A person born in the world will consume about 30 times as much as a person born in the poor world. So the 16 million babies born each year in the rich world have about 4 times as much impact on world resources as the 109 million babies born each year in the poor world



TO HIM WHO HATH SHALL BE GIVEN

In 1900 the average person in the rich world had 4 times as much as a person in the poor world

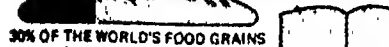
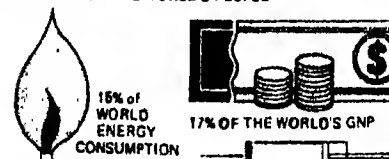


Today the pay rise which an American can expect in one year is greater than an Indian can expect in a 100 years

"Observers have wondered why their contemporaries who are three or five or ten times richer than their grandparents did not seem to be three or five or ten times happier or more content or more richly developed as human beings."

Robert Heilbroner in 'The Human Prospect'

THE DEVELOPING WORLD HAS



Two Abortions for every Five Births

The ability to choose how many children to have and when to have them is vital to family health

SPACE FOR HEALTH

Too many babies too close together can mean...

More children die

More mothers die



Mainnutrition because children weaned too soon

Birth weights are lower

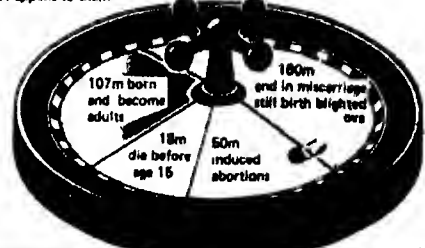
More mothers are exhausted and fall ill

WANTED: A BETTER WAY



THE BIG GAMBLE

There are 336m conceptions every year. What happens to them -

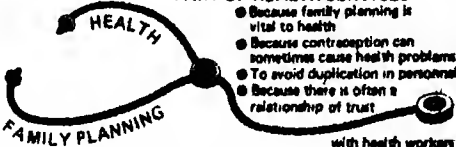


WOMEN OF THE THIRD WORLD



In most developing countries more than half the married women age 15 to 49 don't want any more children. But of those only half are using any modern contraceptive.

THE MERGER FAMILY PLANNING SHOULD BE PART OF HEALTH SERVICES



LIVING

Li for Lee

Bruce Lee—the man who mesmerised many an audience with his inhuman physical performances in the popular *Dragon* series—died a few years ago. But the cult of Kung-Fu still lives and producer Italo Zingarelli has tried to make the best of it. He has discovered a successor to the *Dragon*, Bruce Lee: the Tiger Bruce Li.

Bruce Li makes his entry into the celluloid world with *Exit The Dragon Enter The Tiger*. The film is set in Singapore and Hong Kong where the Tiger runs wild after hearing the news of the death of his master, Bruce Lee. He swears revenge and after tracking down the murder-



Bruce Li

rer—a "baron" of the Hong Kong underground—Bruce Li destroys the forces of evil and thus pays the ultimate homage to his master.

Exit The Dragon Enter The Tiger seems to have all the trappings of the usual martial goulash. Added attractions are the co-stars, Terence Hill and Bud Spencer. The film is being released in India by the National Film Development Corporation (formerly Film Finance Corporation). Its fate at the box-office depends, by and large, on the martial expertise of the Tiger and, of course, the audience's acceptance of Bruce Li as the successor to the great Bruce Lee.

Copping it

On June 3 this year, K. Gajendra, a timid photographer of the *Indian Express*, was arrested in Madras for "insulting and punching" a senior police officer near the Hotel President where an AIADMK convention was under way. Gajendra spoke to Arthur Pals about the incident. It seems that on that fateful day the photographer had accidentally bumped into a police officer who lost his temper. "Watch out," the

policeman said. "Look where you are going." A little later, while talking to his friends, he was confronted by another officer. "Walk quietly and don't talk," said this one. Gajendra told him that he wasn't talking about the police. This, apparently, made the officer furious. "Don't talk rubbish," he cried and immediately asked his subordinates to take the photographer in to custody.

Minor men, major contenders



Anil Dalpat Sonawaria

Anil Dalpat Sonawaria, a strapping young man from Karachi, is one of the contenders for the Pakistan cricket team. An agile wicketkeeper. Anil was spotted and then groomed by none other than the ex-Pakistani batting genius, Hanif Mohammed. Apart from Anil's, the other name which figures in the list of 35 probables for the Pakistan-West Indies Test series later this year is that of pace bowler Mohinder Kumar. Both Anil and Mohinder play for the Pak Hindus—a club which was formed by Anil's father, Dr Dalpat Sonawaria, and which now figures in the Karachi Cricket League.

Music in the woods

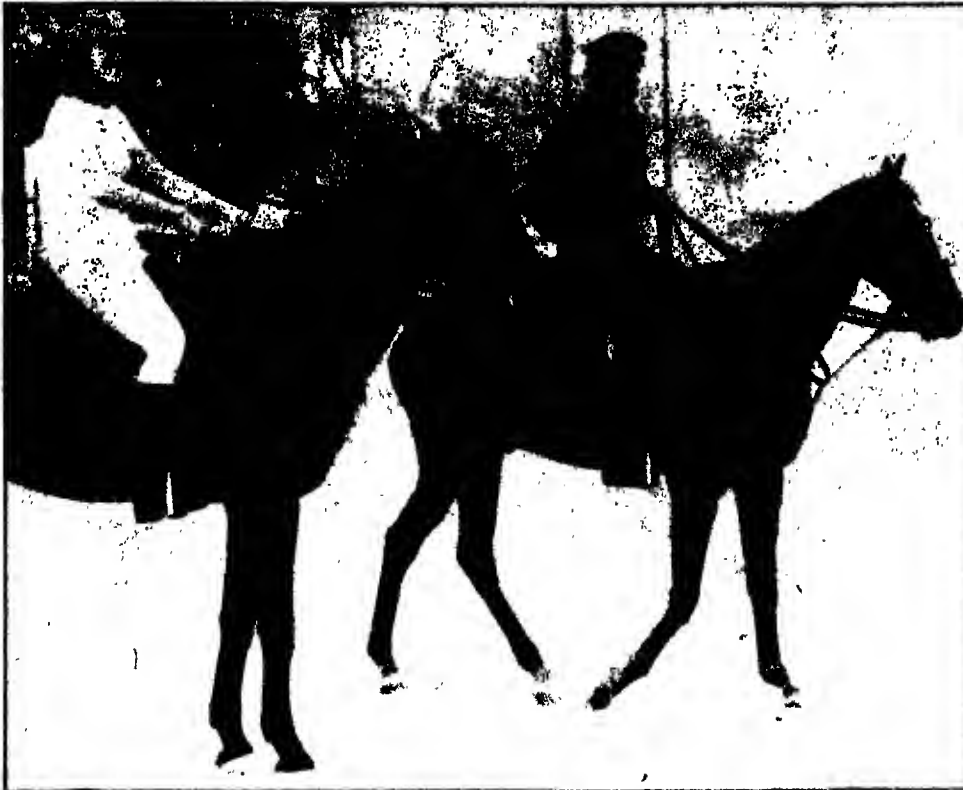
As the shadows lengthen over the Moghul Gardens in Pinjore, the unaware visitor is caught in his steps by the exquisite melody from the flute of a man who is almost as antique as the three hundred-year-old Garden. With unkempt hair and in ragged clothes, Khan sits in front of a row of fountains, close to the Rangmahal, engrossed in his own music. Sometimes he puts down the flute and resumes with his voice which is no less melodious.

No one knows too much about Khan. It is rumoured that he is Krishna Kumar Sharma, a local family man. Deserted by wife and daughter, he turned into a *fakir* and took to music. He is a poor man now, but poverty has not broken his spirits. When asked by a Minister to entertain a few guests, Khan is reported to have said: "My voice and mood cannot be controlled by the Minister. He will have to wait for my usual appearances". His mood, apparently, is controlled by the haunting darkness after the sun has set over the Moghul Gardens. It is then that the strains of his flute rise to break the evening calm. They are strains of melancholy deeper than the night and

strains which have moved many a young and cheerful heart.



Animal husbandry



Nafisa and husband "Pickles"

Kamali Julla

Remember Nafisa Ali? The swimming champ turned beauty queen turned photographer turned actress? The former Miss India who married Major "Pickles" Sodhi is now taking to equestrianism. Not surprising at all, when you consider that everybody in the Sodhi family is quite at home in the saddle. Certainly the family have maintained a tradition of excellence on horseback. Lt. Col. Billy Sodhi is a polo international and a champion equestrian while his wife Roshan is a national show jumping champion. The entire Sodhi family can be seen every morning on the course of Jaipur's 61 Cavalry, where they sweat it out, trotting, galloping and jumping. And Nafisa, notes Prakash Bhandari, looks every bit the part of the champion horsewoman in her breeches. When asked if she would accept an offer to play the role of a lady Robin Hood, Nafisa replied that she would not accept any more rules. Not even if she were asked to portray the Rani of Jhansi!

Ms Calculation

Shakuntala Devi, the famed mathematical genius, finally slipped up in her calculations when she tried to get the better of her tenant—playback singer Sharad Kumar.

It appears that in February, 1979, Shakuntala Devi landed up at her tenant's flat on Mount Pleasant Road in Bombay and, in his absence, took possession of the flat. In court, however, she propounded a different theory.

In December, 1978, Sharad Kumar met her in Calcutta and asked her to help him out of a crisis; she agreed to give him Rs 50,000 as a loan and in return for her flat.

Shakuntala Devi produced a piece of paper before the judge. That, according to her, was documentary evidence of the fact that Sharad Kumar had accepted the loan and also agreed to abide by the other condition.

The judge, S. R. Shah, pointed out that the document, except for the signature at the bottom, was written in Shakuntala



Devi's hand. While concluding the case, the judge remarked: "I am of the view that the defendant, who calls herself a lady having international fame and who is gifted by God with intelligence, has misused her intelligence in making use of the signature of the plaintiff on some paper with the mala fide intention of serving her own purpose. I am constrained to observe that the chit is a fraud perpetrated by the defendant on the plaintiff".

Fighting shy

A few years ago house-owners in the affluent sections of Bangalore city used to look around for Iranian students to rent their houses to. Hostels vied with one another to encourage those Iranians who did not want to stay on college campuses. Attractive girls flirted with the Iranians in the best of bars and restaurants. Brigade Road ech-

oed to the sound of motorcycle engines as the Iranians and their girlfriends raced up and down. But the recent rioting at BMS Engineering College, Bangalore, put a damper on the whole affair when property worth Rs 90,000 was damaged and several students were injured. And now Bangalore is having second thoughts.

DUBIOUS DISTINCTIONS

Burning problem of the fortnight: cigarettes.

Hikers of the fortnight: petrol prices and motorists.

Suggestion of the fortnight: Mohammad Ali's suspected brain damage qualifies him to run for the US presidency.

Flight of the fortnight: Indian Airlines fares, which seem to be soaring higher than the planes.

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Because we fly the world every day, we have a good idea of what the world wants from an airline. Which is why we can show you three good ways to fly:

There's First Class with Pan Am's famous Sleeperette® seat that stretches out the length of four and a half



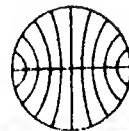
windows—so you can read, relax or sleep.

Or, Clipper® Class. The special

section created for business travellers with an empty seat beside you whenever possible.

Or Full Service Economy Class which offers international service no matter what price you pay.

After all, what good is flying all over the world if you can't enjoy it?



PAN AM

**We fly the world
the way the world wants to fly.**

WHERE is Mehmood? The question is on everyone's lips, but no one seems to have any answers. One school of thought is of the opinion that he fled the country with his wife, an American citizen, and that they are both currently in the United States. A rumour, nothing more, but then again, no one has any definite information about the star. He has not been seen for some time and judging by the grapevine, he owes large amounts to various people.

According to a source in the enforcement directorate, Mehmood is very much at large. He has not left the country, although he did leave the shores of India recently to partici-

participate in a stage show abroad. Once he returned, he is said to have gone into hibernation in Bangalore, where he owns a stud farm. According to yet another source in Ayyakkar Bhavan, the star owes large amounts to the government by way of taxes. The Income Tax Department, therefore, has directed him not to transfer his assets, a normal course of action when taxes are due.

This apparently upset Mehmood's applecart as it prevented him from selling off his property. Not that there are reports that he was about to sell it anyway, but he could have been about to do so in order to pay off his tax arrears.

A few years ago, Sheikh Mukhtar, faced with a similar predicament, chose to sell off his property and flee to Pakistan, via Dubai, with the print of his picture *Noorjehan*. The film, it is said, was well concealed in his vintage car. Once in Pakistan, he had problems getting the film released because distributors objected on the grounds that it was an Indian picture. Somehow, Sheikh managed

Mehmood has the last laugh

By A CORRESPONDENT

to convince the authorities to release the film, which led to an uproar in the Pakistani film industry. However, before his dream of seeing the film released in Pakistan became a reality, he died last month.

It is quite possible that Mehmood had similar plans, especially in view of the fact that his last few pictures had not been faring very well. In fact, his last movie, *Ek Baap Che Beta* was a financial disaster. Apart from the fact that Mehmood had borrowed heavily and has not been able to repay his debts, there was another problem. His acting assignments showed a downward trend, mostly due to the star's misconduct. Producer Kishore Desai, whose venture *Darling*, *Darling* was stuck because Mehmood was playing a game of hide and seek with him, had to resort to other means to complete his picture. He sought the intervention of the Joint Disputes Settlement Committee of the All India Film Producers Council in order to get Mehmood to agree to dates for shooting. According to Kishore, Mehmood wanted to hike his price even though his stock was low enough as it was. The reason, he said, was that his market price had risen. Another producer, for whom Mehmood was working, had to pay the star a large sum, albeit a loan. Apparently the actor had started wailing and beating his breast, claiming that he had no money to buy fodder for his horses which, he said, were starving. "If you don't help me, they will die" the star had said. The producer had given him the money but had a hard time getting it back, judging by accounts.

Dev Anand had signed him for *Des Pardes* but by the completion of the first schedule, the comedian had drawn all his dues on one excuse or another. Apparently, Dev had a difficult time completing the picture because of Mehmood's irresponsible behaviour, despite the fact that he has been warned about it. But Dev was confident, and said: "I can handle him", and then proceeded to test his own theory. He signed the comedian for *Loot Maar* and *Man Pasand*, both of which were subsequently completed and are now waiting for release.

Enquiries at the star's residence elicit evasive replies about his whereabouts. This is understandable, but Government sources state that he is actually in Bangalore. Meanwhile, everybody waits for the first confirmed piece of news about the star who disappeared.



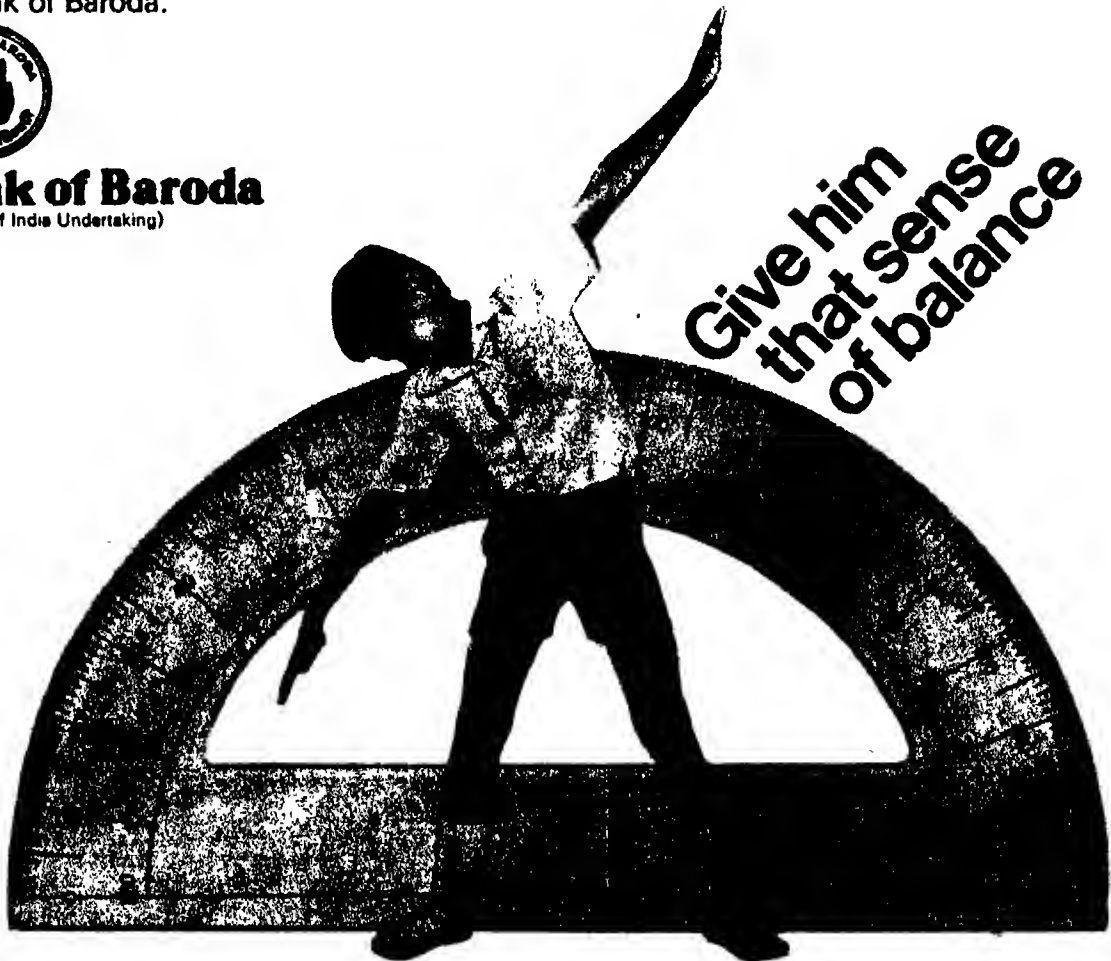
Banking at 10

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The right to strike

THE Essential Services Maintenance (Maharashtra) Ordinance, promulgated on May 14, is by no means novel.

Like many a predecessor on the statute book, it empowers the State Government to prohibit strikes in essential services in the state. Participation in a strike in essential services is made punishable with up to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs.200. Those who instigate such strikes or finance them could be punished with up to one year's imprisonment and a fine of Rs.1,000.

The police are empowered to arrest without warrant any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed an offence, under the ordinance. Offences under the Ordinance have been made non-bailable. The Ordinance lists the essential services—transport, supply of gas, water or electricity, hospitals and dispensaries, public services—and confers on the State Government the power to add to the list by declaring any other service as an essential service.

The definition of "strike" includes not only refusal to work but also refusal to work overtime where such work is necessary for the maintenance of any essential service as well as any other conduct which is likely to result in, or results in, cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service. This would include "go slow" tactics as a means of protest.

Since such legislation is becoming all too common, two fundamental propositions need to be made. First, that judicial review of the exercise of the Government's powers can be invoked and far more readily than the Central and the State Governments suspect. Secondly, despite the fact that the Constitution does not recognise the right to strike as a fundamental right, it is nonetheless possible to contend that denial of the right to strike can be violative of some recognised, guaranteed fundamental rights; for example, the right to form associations or unions and to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business guaranteed by Article 19(1) and (g), respectively. These propositions emerge very clearly from the march of case law in recent years whose impact neither the executive nor the legislature has yet appreciated.

Consider the first proposition. Section 3(1) of the Ordinance provides "If the State Government of Maharashtra is satisfied that in the public interest it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by general or special order, prohibit strikes in any essential service specified in the order".

Civil Liberties



By A. G. NOORANI

Few realise that the doctrine of the finality of the executive's subjective satisfaction has been rejected by the judiciary, whether in cases of preventive detention, administrative orders or any other. Satisfaction means honest satisfaction and the State Government will have to demonstrate to the High Court, in response to a challenge by a writ petition, that its order banning a strike was not designed to resolve a genuine labour dispute by brute force but to avert a real danger to the "public interest" by irresponsible or intemperate conduct. Some margin of discretion is granted by the courts to the executive. But if a prima facie case of abuse of power is made out by a trade union, the Government will be very much called upon to provide a convincing answer.

As for the right to strike, it is



nearly twenty years since the Supreme Court ruled that it does not exist. The Court ruled that "even a very liberal interpretation of sub-clause (c) of clause (1) of Article 19 (the right to form associations or unions) cannot lead to the conclusion that the trade unions have a guaranteed right to an effective collective bargaining or to strike, either as part of collective bargaining or otherwise. The right to strike or the right to declare a lockout may be controlled or restricted by appropriate industrial legislation, and the validity of such legislation would have to be tested not with reference to the criteria laid down in clause (4) of Article 19 but by totally different considerations....In our opinion, the right guaranteed under sub-clause (c) of clause (1) of Article 19 extends to the formation of an association and in so far as the activities of the association are concerned or as regards the steps which the union might take to achieve the purpose of its creation, they are subject to such laws as might be framed and that the validity of such laws is not to be tested by reference to the criteria to be found in clause (4) of Article 19 of the Constitution (Clause 4 lists the grounds on which the fundamental right to form associations or unions can be reasonably restricted.)

The judgement was based on the fundamental right to form associations or unions (Article 19(1)(c)). What of the fundamental right to carry on any occupation, trade or business embodied in Article 19(1)(g)? Is it not possible to render this right nugatory by an arbitrary and permanent ban on collective bargaining or on strikes and thereby make the employees helplessly dependent?

The right to travel abroad is not a fundamental right, either. Yet, two years ago in Mrs Maneka Gandhi's case, the Supreme Court ruled that denial of a passport to a man who needs to travel for his business is denial of the right to carry on business. As Mr Justice Bhagwati said: "If a correspondent of a newspaper is given a foreign assignment and he is refused passport or his passport is impounded, it would be direct interference with his freedom to carry on his profession. Examples can be multiplied, but the point of the matter is that though the right to go abroad is not a fundamental right, the denial of the right to go abroad may, in truth and in effect, restrict freedom of speech and expression or freedom to carry on a profession so as to contravene Article 19(1)(a) or 19(1)(g)." What is said of the right to a passport holds good for the right to strike, as well.

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THE WORLD

Beauty conquest



The Asia Quest '80

This one is for the beauty-lovers' scrapbook. We mean beauty that one sees in women. And for all of us in Asia this is something to really boast about. For the photograph is of the winners of the Miss Asia Quest 1980. Ms Lorraine Gaye McGrady (centre) of Australia poses with a bevy of beauties who could not perhaps match her but nevertheless are equally bewitching as you can well see. On Ms McGrady's ex-

treme left is New Zealander Cara Pollock (only the third runner-up). Next to her is the enchanting Filipino Ms Rosa Maria de Vera (the first runner-up). Miss Asia's left-hand consorts are Ms Annie Chen Chiau Chuin (the second runner-up from Singapore) and the last but not the least beautiful of them all is Ms Mine Koldas (the fourth runner-up) from Turkey. Asians are beautiful.

No run of the mill, he

"Everyone is immersed in it like a hot bath; therefore there is no ecstasy, no surprise, no enjoyment," said the famous author Henry Miller talking of sex which he treated unabashedly in his *Tropic of Cancer*. He would surely have known. Married and divorced four times he took a last shot at the wedding bells in September 1967 when he took the Japanese entertainer and singer Hoki Tokuda to wife (see photograph above). But the marriage broke up in a couple of



years. Although they separated Hoki continued to visit Henry Miller from time to time. As for Miller he never remarried. The celebrated novelist died on May 7.

Godsend

Political leaders, apart from dabbling in international and national diplomacy, have been taking a hand in religion. The last one to do so is Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi. Recently he was offered a rather large donation in money by Shree Pramukh Swami of the Swaminarayan sect. The

bicentenary celebrations of the religious foundation have called for a world tour by the leader which explains the presence of the holy man in Nairobi. We don't know if the President liked receiving the donation but it proves that religious bodies seem to be taking a different angle.

Liquidity

Norma B. Tablizo, 40, owner of a boutique in Tabaco, Manila, woke up one morning to find herself a moneyed woman. Coca-Cola with its magic wand had performed the miracle. Last summer Coca-Cola launched a sales blitz complete with sweepstakes and prizes amounting to four million pesos (US \$ 540,000) and the first prize was bagged by Norma. She got a palatial house, two round the world air-tickets, a dazzling Mercedes Benz, furniture and over 13,000 dollars in hard cash. But will Norma be able to collect the prize at all? Filipino statutes require the recipient of any prize to pay ten per cent as tax. The taxman is already knocking on her door, and to crown it all Norma is yet to find the location of the house she has won.

The rub

Pretty girls in Singapore are luring innocent tourists with the offer of "sexy massages" and pilfering the latter of all their valuables in the course of the night. Most of the tourists are often too embarrassed to report the matter to the police. The result: the girls are going scotfree. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in an attempt to put an end to the matter, advised the hotels to put up signs warning the tourists of the hazards of receiving massages. Some of the newly-built five-star hotels have even installed close circuit T.V. in their security arrangements. "Apart from that there is not much that we can do" says a senior hotel executive. Indeed, it would be awkward to put up signs like: "Don't talk to girls" or "Please avoid massages".

Still PM



Margaret and Thatcher

'Madame Tussaud, your museum is great'. This sentiment might just be expressed by a lot of women all over the world. After all why shouldn't they sing praises to that hallowed landmark in London. For now the first woman Prime Minister of

Britain is safely ensconced with the royalty, the famous and even the notorious. In fact, the likeness of Mrs Margaret Thatcher has been so wonderfully executed by Sculptor Ian Hanson that Mrs Thatcher was very pleased when she saw it.



N.G. Shamma

wait and see how Abdullah fares in the box office. He felt that if it flopped then it would not be wise to let Sanjay direct the film. After all everybody knows that *Chandi Sona* flopped.

RAJESH KHANNA is playing it hard to get for the filming of *Narinder Bedi's Be-Bus*. Five reels have already been completed. It seems that Rajesh wants a revision in the rates. But Narinder is not in a mood to oblige. He is simply taking it easy, making no formal move either way. So Rajesh has taken the initiative and refused to report for the shooting at Mahabaleshwar in May. Narinder has therefore gone to *Roshanlal Mulhotra*, Rajesh's manager-cum-what have you, and asked for a letter of consent for the star's replacement. Rajesh replies: "Let him send a letter to me, and I will give it. After all, he wants to replace me. I am not leaving the picture..." This has put Narinder in a bit of a fix as he doesn't want to approach Rajesh at all, be it for a patch-up or for a letter.

HEMA MALINI and **Zeenat Aman** are not on the best of terms, especially after what had happened at the shooting of *Alibaba aur 40 chor*. Hema was not available in Russia for the shooting, thus upsetting the



Shweta Ganesh Gulwady

whole schedule. Instead of being on the sets of *Alibaba* in Moscow, she was in London on the sets of *Manmohan Desai's Naseeb*. *Alibaba's* producer had to depute none other than *Dharmendra* to get Hema back to Moscow! Zeenat, who was there all ready to get on with the job, was not amused. What if she started throwing tantrums.

RAJESH KHANNA seems to be having a clandestine affair with the divorcee comedienne *Shammi*. Sans much work and finally separated from *Sultan* she is all set to boost up her career. So, if late, he is trying her level best to be ally with Rajesh. One day after the pack up from shooting, the dance director *Sujata* boldly accosted the star and asked him boldly whether anything is going on between him and Shammi. Rajesh, without even batting an eyelid, replied "Ha, kiska kiska bolna nahin..." That was enough to shut *Sujata's* mouth.

ACCORDING to the *Sanjay* group it was *Zeenat Aman* who was chasing *Imran Khan*. And not the other way round. Zeenat used to call the Pakistani star constantly just to coo sweet nothings into his ears. But Zeenat's sad luck she could not nab Imran, not even for once. Imran played it cool, may be as a friendly gesture to Sanjay. But he could not resist the

temptation for long. What's more, she had moved into a five-star hotel with the excuse that her own flat was badly in need of a face-lift. Whatever it is, it's her producers who got the jolt for they would not get her dates.

ROMU SIPPY's *Satte pe Sat* starring *Amitabh Bachchan* is badly stuck. Originally *Rekha* was cast as one of the heroines opposite *Amitabh*. But when *Jaya Bachchan* put her foot down, *Amit* decided to replace her. The producer was duly informed. After a couple of days a message came from her to restore her. Then again *Amit* dilly dallied. And now the heroine to co-star *Amit* is yet to be finalised.

MUMTAZ desperately wanted to stage a come back to films and fortunately *Habibul Khatoon* was there waiting for her. *Sanjay* took over the film after *R. R. Chopra* opted out. The producer *Roshan Wadhwa* wanted to

Raju Upadhyay



KHAAS BAAT

It seems I. V. Sasi is fed up with the Hindi version of *Her* rights which he is directing for producer Promod Chakravarty. It stars Promod's protegee Shoma Anand. Left to himself Sasi would have had his favourite Seema. In the original version Seema was just an ordinary street-walker who kept with ordinary people whereas Promod wanted Shoma Anand to play the dazzling callgirl who visits her clients in phoren cars. So it's just possible that Sasi has lost interest in the project. Besides, this misunderstanding, Guru, a Tamil film godfathered by Promod Chakravarty and directed by Sasi has not come up to the producer's expectations, according to the studio sources.

HAS MGR finally decided to give up acting? "I have greater responsibilities than before and I believe I owe more to the people by way of political performance", MGR declared recently at a Press meet. Apart from *Idhudhan En Badil*, MGR is not going to complete two of his pending films which have been held up for at least thirty months. Producers of these films were under the impression that MGR would hand over the Chief Ministership to one of his trusted colleagues and return to films but it seems that MGR has developed a liking for

the executive chair. However, people will continue to see him week after week in documentaries produced by the Tamil Nadu government. This is some consolation for his die-hard fans.

ONE more fading star from Madras has found asylum in a Karnataka production: *Vennira Adai*. *Nirmala* has been given a role in this film opposite *Shankar Nag*, the blue-eyed boy of the Kannada box-office.

WHO's behind the vicious propaganda against Kamalahasan? Many self-appointed box-office pundits go around swearing that distributors are not keen on releasing his prestigious film *Meendun Kokila* starring *Rekha* and *Sridivi*. How come such a concentrated effort is being made to write off Kamalahasan just because he has a couple of flops? Some claim that director I. V. Sasi is behind these rumours but Sasi's friends say that Sasi has no time for such stunts.

ISARI VELAN, MGR's devoted side-kick, and also a small time comedian failed to win a seat in the recent Assembly elections. Surely MGR will find him some lucrative post. Meanwhile Velan is shopping for small roles.

DIRECTOR Puttanna Kanagal and actress Arati seem to be coming out from the cold. Kanagal one of the top-most Kannada directors of the seventies suffered a couple of big flops two years ago, but now he is confidently looking forward to the release of his *Ranga Nayaki* starring his favourite Arati. When *Filmfare* judged his Kannada venture *Dharmaseree* as the best film, he also received the award for the best director and Arati bagged the best actress award.

THE anxiety plaguing Devar unit has reached a new peak. Devar has been spawning hits in Tamil and Telegu for more than two decades but this banner could boast of only one in Hindi: *Haathi Mere Saathi*. Subsequently Hindi films made with popular heroes like *Rishi Kapoor* (*Raja*), *Dharmendra* (*Maa*) and *Do Aur Do Paanch* (*Amitabh*) have done poor business. These films surprisingly did not have animals in them. Now the unit is banking heavily on *Anbukku Nan Adimai* starring *Rajnikant* and *Rathi Agni-hotri* which has done terrific business in the opening week. If it turns out to be a super hit, it should wipe out the humiliation of a *Do Aur Do Paanch*.

PIOUSJI

Shoma Anand on the sets of "Patita"





Scene in Bombay' from a drawing by Capt. Grindlay.

Captain Robert Melville Grindlay M.R.A.S.&c.

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Beginning June 22

This week the Sun alone is in Gemini, Rahu and Mercury are in Cancer, and Jupiter, Mars and Saturn are conjoined in Leo. Uranus is in Libra, Neptune is in Scorpio and Ketu is in Capricorn. The Moon will be moving through Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius from Virgo.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20) This week is favourable for dealings with elders and those in authority. Your friend or spouse will play an exceptionally important role in your life. A secret love affair will suddenly come to an end. Push your business affairs to the utmost. Promotion in service is most likely. You may go on an unexpected journey. Keep your temper under control. **Good dates:** 22, 24, 26 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



TAURUS (April 21 - May 21) Romance is on the cards but you should exercise all caution and restraint. Be tactful in dealing with your employer. Good fortune in business and professional activities is foreseen. Your family will remain a source of joy and happiness. Guard against any disagreement with your colleagues. Conserve your resources and check extravagant tendencies. Letters are likely to bring good news. **Good dates:** 24, 26, 27 and 29. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South.



GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) This is an eventful week for you. Your intuition will help you to override an awkward situation. An elderly person may prove to be hostile. One of your friends may offer valuable help. You will benefit through a member of the fairer sex. A romance is in the offing. Exercise tact and patience in all your business affairs. A secret matter will turn to your advantage. **Good dates:** 24, 25, 27 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 3 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North-west and South.



CANCER (June 22 - July 22) This week your stars are not particularly favourable. So be content to mark time and exercise caution and restraint in all your affairs. Do not start a new venture and make no important change unless it is imperative. Friends and relatives will not prove very helpful. Control your temper otherwise you may be entangled in a lawsuit. **Good dates:** 23, 27 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 9 and 10. **Favourable direction:** West and South-east.



LEO (July 23 - August 22) A week of mixed fortunes is predicted for you. An elderly person may oppose your long-term plan. Do not gamble if you want to avoid problems on the financial front. Guard against deception from every quarter. Nevertheless your courage and enterprise will bring a fair measure of success. Women will receive costly gifts and presents. Take care of your health. **Good dates:** 23, 25 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 6. **Favourable direction:** South-east and West.



VIRGO (August 23 - September 22) A new friendship will affect your profession. Ask and act upon the advice of your elders. After a minor setback on the financial front, your business affairs will prosper. Be careful in your dealings with the opposite sex. Your domestic life will remain a source of joy. The weekend will be a very happy one. **Good dates:** 22, 24 and 25. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 7 and 11. **Favourable direction:** North and North-east.



LIBRA (September 23 - October 22) This week begins with substantial gains through either promotion or inheritance. You will make slow but steady progress on the business front. A new friendship will boost your career. At the end of the week, a promotion is likely. Your life proceeds smoothly without a hitch. The time is particularly favourable for those in service. A suitable time for romance and marriage. Let your intuition be your guide. **Good dates:** 22, 23 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 4, 2 and 8. **Favourable direction:** South.



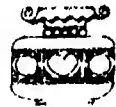
SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21) This week is exceptionally good for you. Concentrate on your profession. You are assured of success. Promotion is likely, provided you are guided by your intuition. You will gain through elders and property matters. This is the right time for you to undertake a new venture. A happy romance is likely. Wait for important letters before taking a decision. Check all extravagant tendencies. **Good dates:** 22, 23, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 2, 4 and 7. **Favourable direction:** North and West.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 - December 21) You will have several excellent opportunities to clinch lucrative business deals and improve your financial position. Many will gain through betting, gambling and speculation. A happy romance or an interesting event is on the cards. Gains through an unexpected source are likely. You may soon undertake a long journey. Your fortune will undergo a change for the better. **Good dates:** 22, 24, 26 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 6, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-west.



CAPRICORN (December 22 - January 20) Conserve your resources and check extravagant tendencies. After experiencing unexpected good fortune you will encounter opposition from a friend. Your personal life will proceed smoothly. A fair measure of financial gain is likely. Pay attention to your business dealings. **Good dates:** 23, 25 and 27. **Lucky numbers:** 3, 6 and 4. **Favourable direction:** North.



AQUARIUS (January 21 - February 19) Your prospects are quite favourable this week. You will benefit through property matters. The advice of an elderly relative should prove very helpful. Do not allow your love affair to interfere with your business dealings. Avoid litigation. Some good fortune is likely provided you exercise a good deal of caution. There is a possibility of a change of place or a promotion. **Good dates:** 23, 24, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 5, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** West.



PISCES (February 20 - March 20) Your stars will prove extremely favourable this week. You will win the praise and appreciation of everyone around you. A good time for travel. Pay all your attention to business. Let intuition be your guide. A promotion will crown a successful week. A valuable new friendship will blossom. You may develop an interest in occult sciences. Differences with business partners must be settled amicably. **Good dates:** 24, 25 and 28. **Lucky numbers:** 1, 7 and 9. **Favourable direction:** South-east.

M B RAMAN

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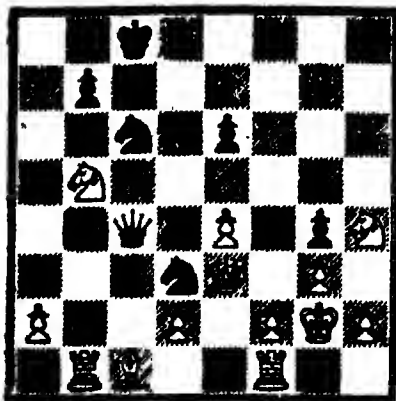
heros BE-400



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chess

Tal (Black) to move



Polugaevsky (White)

Position after White's 23rd move

Latvian express

Mikhail Tal is back in business. In the recent Interzonal tournament in Riga he ploughed through all opposition like a runaway train to take first place with a massive score of 14/17, a performance of Fischer-like dimensions. No doubt he was encouraged by being able to play in his home town, but a Tal comeback had been on the cards for some time.

His fine performance in the 'World Cup' tournament in Montreal earlier last year, where he shared first place with Karpov, renewed speculation that he might be recapturing the form of his early years and he entered the Interzonal as one of the favourites. Nobody, however, could have predicted the ease and authority with which he swept such formidable opposition aside.

His play seems to have found a new solidity and maturity. Maybe he learnt something from Karpov, with whom he trained extensively for the latter's defence of his title in Baguio. Certainly the years have not dulled the edge of his attacking play. Just look at the following game, in which he annihilated his principal rival in Riga, Lev Polugaevsky.

White: Polugaevsky. Black: M. Tal.
Interzonal Tournament, Riga, 1979. English Opening

1. N-KB3, P-QB4; 2. P-B4, N-KB3; 3. N-B3, P-Q4; 4. PXP, NXP; 5. P-K4! A very sharp variation which has become popular of late, but 'Polu' should know better than to try such a line against Tal.

6. ... N-N5; 6. B-B4, B-K3! The most critical line. Black sacrifices his pawn formation in order to establish his knight on Q6.

7. BXB, N-Q6+ 8. K-B1, PXB; 9. N-KN5, O-N3! A new move, though not an unnatural one. It clearly took Polugaevsky by surprise.

10. O-K2, P-B5; 11. P-QN3, P-KR3; 12. N-B3 12. O-R5+ K-Q2 would not improve White's prospects.

12. ... N-B3! 13. PXP, O-O-O; With excellent attacking chances for the sacrificed pawn. White's position is cut in two by the NQ6.

14. P-N3, P-N4; 15. K-N2, O-B4; 16. O-QN1, B-N2; 17. N-QN5, QXP; 18. O-K3, KR-B1; With the important point

19. NXP+ NXP; 20. QXN, QXKP defending QN2.

21. R-KB1, P-N5; 22. N-R4 (DIAGRAM)

23. ... NXP! Beginning one of those blistering attacks for which he has become world famous. If 21. RXP, RXP+ 22. KXR

(or 22. QXR, QXKP+ and ... QXR) ... R-B1+ 23. K-N2, O-B6 mate.

21. N-N5, R-QN1 A superb move based on a mating idea which will only be seen several moves later.

22. N-N5, O-N3; 24. O-K1, R-QN1-KB1 Leaving the KR to its fate and unveiling his brilliant tactical plan.

25. NXR, N-Q6! And here it is. N26. O-K2 to keep K4 protected, then 26. ... N-Q5; 27. O-Q1, QXQ; 28. RXP, R-B7+ 29. K-R1, N-B6 and mates on R7, so White has no choice but to allow the black queen to re-enter the attack - with terrible effect.

28. O-Q1, QXKP; 27. RXP, PXR+ Another thread in the net - 28. QXP, N-K3+ 29. K-B1, O-B4 Threat ... O-R5+ White is destroyed.

29. K-N1, B-Q5+ Resigns. Magical - pure Tal.

MICHAEL STEAN

bridge

Responding to (generalised) strictures in the International Bridge Press Association, I must acknowledge that my recent accounts of world championship deals are derived from the daily bulletin published by the Brazilian Federation, edited by Henry and Dorothy Francis, assisted by 'our own' Albert Dormer.

One of Dormer's contributions noted some interesting features of this deal from the match between Italy and the new zone, bearing the cumbersome title of Central America-Caribbean:

Dealer, East. Game all.

♠ A 9 5 2

♥ 2

♦ A 8 7 2

♣ K 10 4 2

♠ Q 8 4

♥ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

♦ 4

♣ 3

N

W

E

S

♠ 10 7 3

♥ Q J

♦ K J 10 3

♣ A Q 7 5

♠ K J 6

♥ A K

♦ Q 9 6 5

♣ J 9 6 6

This was the bidding when Italy was North-South:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
De Falco	Dhars	Franco	Calvo
1♠	No	1♠	No
1NT	No	2♠	No
2NT	No	3♠	No
3NT	No	No	No

Possessing little confidence in his long heart suit, West led his singleton club. East won and switched to ♥ Q South cleared the clubs and East led another heart.

With no picture of the heart distribution, South took a spade finesse for his ninth trick, so West, after all, made a number of heart tricks and South was two down.

At all the other tables East opened the bidding and West, in one way or another, showed his length in hearts. This puts a different complexion on the play in 3NT. If South knows that East has opening values and West long hearts, he can make the contract by clearing the clubs and playing on diamonds. East wins the fourth round of this suit and is forced to open up the spades. South plays low from hand, of course, and West's Queen is trapped.

Alberto Calvo, who passed the East hand, is Panama's new ambassador in Tokyo. He showed on this occasion the long-established virtue of diplomatic silence. The C-A-C team finished a creditable fourth in the round robin, winning one of its two matches against North America.

TERENCE REESE

stamps



Two high values have been added to the long New Zealand definitive series which has been in use since 1975. Garden roses and Maori artefacts provide the designs of the low value stamps and there are now six high values featuring New Zealand sea-shells. The 52 stamp (above) shows *Adriacea heliotropum*, popularly known as the circular saw or, as its Latin name suggests, the star shell. Unfortunately for conchologists, the circular saw is a deep-water shell and rather scarce. The best examples are dredged up by oyster fishermen in the Foveaux Strait, between South Island and Stewart Island. The new stamp, with a sterling face value of approximately £1, will be more easily obtainable. The other new issue is a \$1 stamp featuring the New Zealand scallop, *Pecten novaezelandiae*.

C. W. HILL

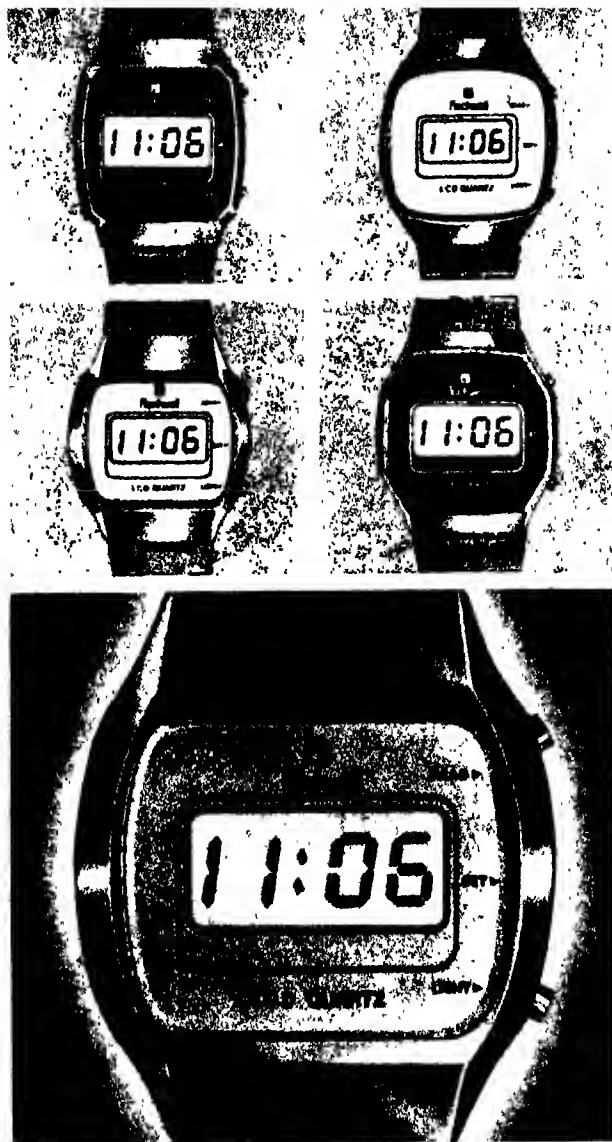
quiz

QUESTIONS

1. Roman Polanski is known to have directed a large number of films. Which is the first short film ever made by him?
2. With what would you associate Silly Symphonies?
3. What is escape velocity?
4. Insulin, when administered in proper amounts, keeps the diabetic's blood sugar at or near the normal level. What is Insulin?
5. When would the currency of a country be said to be floating?
6. The Burmese currency is subdivided into Pyas. Hundred such equal the standard unit? What is the name given to the unit?

1. The Fat and the Lean (1961)
2. A series of Disney animated cartoons, the first of which was The Ugly Duckling (1938)
3. It is the speed with which an object must be projected from the surface of a heavenly body so that it may escape from the gravitational field of the body, without further propulsion.
4. It is a hormone secreted by the pancreas and was discovered in 1921 by Frederick Banting and Charles Best.
5. When the currency is allowed to fluctuate freely on the foreign exchange market in response to supply and demand.
6. Kyat

ANSWERS

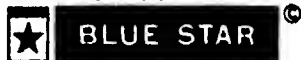


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Shipl SG-2A/78



BARDOLI : A notice issued to the members of the Cricket Club of India (CCI) states: "Members are earnestly requested not to make use of the face towels for wiping shoes, etc., because the stains on the towels, when used for such purposes, cannot be washed out, and therefore the towels have got to be discarded, resulting in loss to the club." And one was under the impression that the members of the CCI never used face towels to wipe their shoes—*Mid-day* (R. B. Chauhan, Bardoli)

CALCUTTA : Strange though it may seem, a letter took 17 years four months and 25 days to reach Calcutta from Konkhol in Uttar Pradesh. The letter bearing postmark "Konkhol" was posted on January 2, 1963 and delivered to the addressee, Mr Samar Rudra, MLA, on May 27 last. Showing the letter to newsmen, Mr Rudra said a sanyasi of the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan had written it to him—*The Times of India* (R. B. Chauhan, Bardoli)

KOHIMA : Orders under Section 144 CrPC have been promulgated in the Hill area here where Ministers and senior officials reside following fears of breach of public tranquility. Trouble was expected as some of the new Ministers occupied bungalows in the face of refusal by former Ministers to vacate them. According to official sources a former Minister has registered a case of alleged trespass against a present Minister for forcibly trying to occupy his bungalow. Entry of all persons to the area except Ministers, legislators, officials, members of their families and persons authorised by the government, has been banned, the sources said—*The Hindu* (Neil Iyer, Bhillai)

THANJAVUR : A teacher, Mrs Gomathi Srinivasan has been elected from Valangaiman (SC) constituency in Thanjavur district. An interesting feature of her election was that she had filed her nomination as a dummy to her husband, the AIADMK's official candidate, Mr Srinivasan's nominations was rejected at the time of scrutiny and she contested the seat on behalf of the AIADMK—*The Hindu* (K. Diwakar, Madras)

TIRUPATI : The Lord and His chosen ones, scriptures declare, are beyond physical laws. Sri Venkateswara University,

founded in the name of the Lord and run in the name of the Lord, goes a step further. It expects the students to fulfil the divine standard. How else could one explain the time-table for M. Com final examination for external students? The students are expected to face two examinations on the same day at the same time. The University's examination time-table clearly informs the candidates that Group II and Group IV examinations are being held on the same date and during the same hours—9 a.m. to 12 noon. The students were given the choice of any two groups out of four. But somewhere unknown to the students the rules have been changed offering the students the choice of combination of Groups II and III or Groups III and IV. Since the examinations are to be held in July there is still time for the university to alter the time-table—*The Deccan Herald*, (S. T. S. Prasad, Hubli)

CALCUTTA : A conscience-stricken passenger has sent a bank draft for Rs 30 to the General Manager, Eastern Railway, against ticketless journey he had made about 14 years ago. Now a resident of Port Blair, he has confessed in an accompanying letter that way back in 1966, he had travelled without a ticket once from Sealdah to Farakka. Unable to buy the ticket before boarding the Darjeeling Mail, he had been asked by a railway official to buy it on the train, but he could not do so either. The letter, has a heading—"Conscience money"—*The Statesman* (R. K. Varshney, Calcutta)

COIMBATORE : Endurance-feat record holder N. Parthasarathy who contested as an independent from the Coimbatore East constituency, claimed another record of having spent the lowest amount among all candidates in the state. He had spent only Rs 36 for his poll campaign, he had not defaced any walls with his name or symbol, he had not printed a single hand-bill or erected a single hoarding. He had not addressed a single public meeting using amplifier. Then how did he spend his Rs 36? "I spent Rs 10 to hire a pony, Rs 6 to hire a bullock cart and Rs 20 for taking photographs". He also wanted to create another record of having secured the lowest number of votes in any constituency but is worried now if some of the voters had taken him too seriously—*The Indian Express* (B. Anuradha, Madras)

KOTTAYAM : A veteran Kerala journalist who had been editorial writer on the staff of many leading Kerala newspapers is a lift operator in a New York skyscraper. The journalist-turned-lift operator Mr Alex Venkadath (55) plans to settle down in the USA with his family. His wife is employed in New York as a registered nurse. Mr Alex had contributed to the relief of the poor in India by sending to Mother Teresa the tips he receives from his patrons on the lift—*The Times of India* (V. P. Sudhakaran, New Delhi)

IN India, if you tell the opposition Parties that the world is round, they will immediately say "No, the world is flat"—Kerala Chief Minister, E. K. Nayanar interviewed in *New Delhi*

THE minorities (in Assam) have the fear of their lives. You have to see their faces to understand this—Mrs Indira Gandhi

ASSAM has become a slaughter-house to kill non-Assamese—Amar Roy Pradhan, Forward Block MP

IT is not a question of Bengali versus non-Bengali but Assamese versus non-Assamese—Jyoti Basu

WE will approach all like-minded people who believe in our policies—H. N. Bahuguna

THE Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, is understood to have asked Mr Zail Singh not to interfere in Punjab affairs so that the Chief Minister, Mr Darbara Singh, had a free hand in running the administration—*Indian Express*

1980 is not 1962. We have received signals (from Peking) for normalisation and we have sent counter-signals—Narasimha Rao, Union External Affairs Minister

WE face a collapse of US non-proliferation policy if we send this (nuclear) fuel to India despite its consistent refusal to agree that its civilian nuclear materials would not be used for military bomb purposes—A group of American Congressmen quoted in *The Statesman*

EVERYWHERE in the country there is only discord and conflict... We will ourselves get at each others' throats and destroy ourselves... If things remain this way, we cannot administer the country—Ayatollah Khomeini

I WANTED to start an Islamic movement on the pattern of Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran—Major-General Tajamal Hussain of Pakistan who is being tried for attempting to overthrow General Zia-ul Haq's government

BRITISH people are making their animals better and better while progressive thinking is making human beings worse and worse—Nirad C. Chaudhuri in *Sunday Review*

EVERY woman is a born actress, her first role being that of a coquette—Shahnaz Hussain in *Weekend Review*

I AM too important to be discarded—Dev Anand quoted in *Stardust*

For mixed doubles, you practice away from the court—Bjorn Borg

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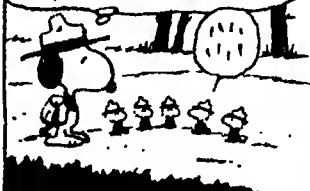
PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ

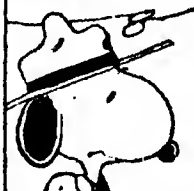
EVERYBODY OUT!
ON THE DOUBLE!



ALL RIGHT, TROOPS, LET'S
HAVE AN EQUIPMENT CHECK..
BILL, WHAT DID YOU BRING?



A COMPASS?!
YOU THINK WE'RE
GONNA GET LOST?



HOW ABOUT YOU,
WOODSTOCK, WHAT
DID YOU BRING?



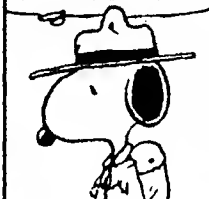
RAINGEAR? GOOD GRIEF, IT ISN'T GOING TO
RAIN! HOW ABOUT YOU, CONRAD? A FIRST-AID
KIT?! WHAT A PESSIMIST!! OLIVIER, WHAT
USELESS ITEM DID YOU BRING?



A FLASHLIGHT ?!!
DON'T TELL ME
YOU'RE AFRAID
OF THE DARK?



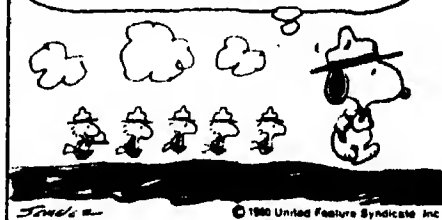
ALL RIGHT, HARRIET,
HOW ABOUT YOU? WHAT
DID YOU BRING?



AN ANGEL FOOD CAKE
WITH SEVEN-MINUTE
FROSTING ?!!!



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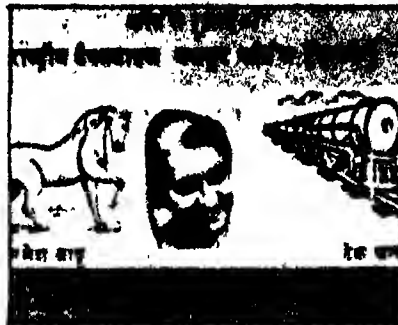
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MAKEN TRIUMPHS

THE trade union movement in Delhi is witnessing the emergence of an entirely new, young force. In the recent elections held in the textile mills for the provident fund advisory committee, the Communists fared badly. The Congress(U) union, led by Lalit Maken, swept the polls and got absolute majorities in all the mills. The Jana Sangh controlled union was close behind Maken but the Congress(I) and the Communists were near-total washouts. One reason for the Congress(I) doing badly is said to be the appointment of Jagdish Tytler as



the vice president of the INTUC. The irony is that while the Congress(I) leaflets bore the photograph of Mrs Gandhi, they failed to attract the voters, but the Congress(U) leaflets



with Maken's photograph triumphed. A section of the Delhi Congress(I) is wondering whether it was wise to have dragged Mrs Gandhi's image into a small election like this.

HOPE FOR MARUTI PLANT

WHAT will be the fate of the Maruti factory? It may be recalled that soon after the Janata came to power, a case was filed by some creditors of Maruti Limited seeking refund of the dealership money deposited by them with the company. Maruti Limited was unable to pay up the amount and as a result the company went into liquidation and the liquidation proceedings were pending before a judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court at Chandigarh at the time of the return

of the Congress(I) to power. Recently a petition was moved by the creditors praying that the liquidation proceedings be shelved as they had alternate plans for utilising the plant machinery and premises of Maruti Limited. What are the alternate plans? Charanjit Singh, MP, the former holder of the Coca-Cola franchise, has signed a deal with Messrs M.A.N. of West Germany and Delhi Automobiles of Sagar Suri is understood to have struck a deal with Volvo of Sweden. The two are likely to go into a partnership to reopen the Maruti factory, Charanjit Singh producing heavy vehicles and Suri going in for cars. The deal is likely to be finalised in the middle of July.

NO YATRA FOR RATH



THE name of Ramchandra Rath, the Youth Congress(I) president, had initially figured in the new list for the Council of Ministers who would hold office after the recent Cabinet reshuffle. He was being offered the post of Minister of State. But Rath wanted something more. He let it be known that he would be satisfied with nothing less than a Cabinet post as he was the only representative from Orissa (J. B. Patnaik had left to become Chief Minister of Orissa) and the state was entitled to a Cabinet rank representative. When Mrs Gandhi came to know of this she promptly dropped his name altogether from the list. It is now rumoured that after the end of the current budget session of Parliament there will be another Cabinet reshuffle and Rath will be again offered the post of Minister of State, though perhaps to compensate for Orissa not having a Cabinet rank representative, it will have another Minister of State.

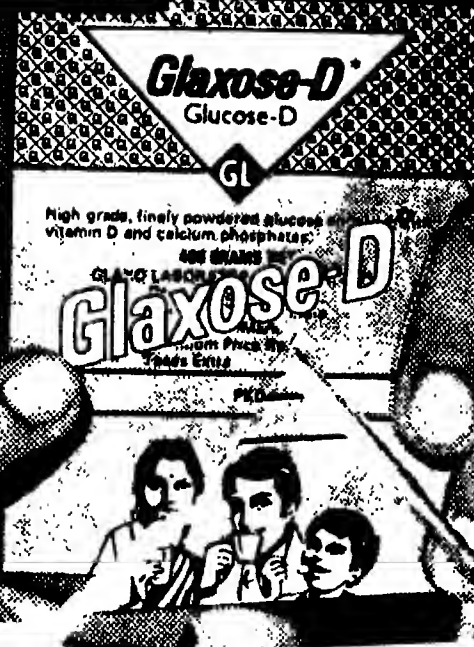
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